

# **The Donald W. Treadgold Papers**

*In Russian, East European  
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## **The Politics of the Domestic Sphere: The *Zhenotdely*, Women's Liberation, and the Search for a *Novyi Byt* in Early Soviet Russia**

**By Michelle Fuqua**

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*The Henry M. Jackson  
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*About the author of this issue.....*

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The *Donald W. Treadgold Papers* publication series was created to honor a great teacher and great scholar. Donald W. Treadgold was professor of history and international studies at the University of Washington from 1949 to 1993. During that time, he wrote seven books, one of which—*Twentieth Century Russia*—went into eight editions. He was twice editor of *Slavic Review*, the organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, and received the AAASS Award for Distinguished Contributions to Slavic Studies, as well as the AAASS Award for Distinguished Service. Professor Treadgold molded several generations of Russian historians and contributed enormously to the field of Russian history. He was, in other ways as well, an inspiration to all who knew him.

The *Treadgold Papers* series was created in 1993 on the occasion of Professor Treadgold's retirement, on the initiative of Professor Daniel Waugh. Professor Treadgold passed away in December 1994. The series is dedicated to the memory of a great man, publishing papers in those areas that were close to his heart.

Sabrina P. Ramet  
Editor

... a woman should learn to look for support somewhere else, to look for it and find it not from men, but from the collective, from the state.

-A. Kollontai<sup>1</sup>

But what will be left of the family if there is no housework? One more family tie—the children. Even here, in this matter, a comradely workers' state will overcome the family. . . . *The family is ceasing to be a necessity.* It is not necessary to the state, because housework is not profitable for the state. It needlessly attracts workers away from other more useful and productive work. It is not necessary to the members of the family themselves because the other task of the family—raising children—is gradually being taken over by society. . . .

-A. Kollontai<sup>2</sup>

Real emancipation of woman, real communism begins only where and when begins a massive struggle . . . against petty housework, or, rather, a massive reconstruction of housework into large scale socialist housekeeping [*khoziaistvo*].

-V.I. Lenin<sup>3</sup>

# The Politics of the Domestic Sphere: The *Zhenotdely*, Women's Liberation, and the Search for a *Novyi Byt* in Early Soviet Russia

By Michelle Fuqua

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## Preface

As the basic unit of tsarist society, the family was a traditional structure upon which were based the patriarchal authority of the tsarist regime and the Russian Orthodox Church. In the eyes of the early Bolsheviks the family was, furthermore, an oppressive institution which subjugated women and children, a place of male despotism and familial tension, especially for the woman, that "slave of her family, slave of her hearth, slave of her children."<sup>4</sup> Considering patriarchy to be a product of capitalist economic relations, the Bolsheviks viewed the private familial realm as a sphere of bourgeois social and economic relations which affected the mores and behaviors of the proletariat. Therefore, the Bolsheviks believed that the familial sphere had to be transformed and the party's influence over this realm increased as a means to combat bourgeois influences within the new Soviet state. Otherwise, the private, familial sphere, as a spontaneous generator of middle-class, complacent values, could undermine the working class struggle to create a new society.

As that part of the population which spent the overwhelming majority of their lives within this private domestic sphere, women, whom the Bolsheviks perceived as the most "unconscious" element of the working class, were considered a potential hindrance to the proletarian class movement. Women needed to be educated and brought into the working class struggle, for, as Lenin often reiterated, the proletarian revolution could not triumph without the participation of the entire laboring population, including women. For communism to be achieved, women had to be liberated from domestic bondage and integrated into the working collective.

The basic tenets of Bolshevik theory on women and the family were based upon Engels' *The Origins of the Family, Private Prop-*

*erty, and the State*, a tract written in 1884, which compiled and elucidated earlier ideas of Marx and Engels. The patriarchal family, Engels wrote, arose with the evolution of private property, as the need to bequeath private wealth required the woman to remain monogamous, enabling the male to identify his heirs. Women were placed under the authority of the male head of the household, who was free to conduct extramarital relations, and the wife was regulated to the domestic sphere, where she became economically dependent upon the husband. To regain autonomy and social equality, as well as to combat the tyranny of private property, women needed to be relieved of the duties binding them to the family hearth. Once women become employed outside the home and gain economic independence, the family as an economic unit (based upon and contributing to the reproduction of capitalist economic relations) will disappear. Yet, even as they emphasized the importance of women's liberation as a weapon to combat the capitalist system, neither Engels nor Marx furnished a specific vision of future familial relations, which left plenty of room for future Communist thinkers to extrapolate.<sup>5</sup>

The *zhenotdely*, the Women's Sections of the Communist Party, which existed from 1919 to 1930, were established to bring women into the party's sphere of influence, to educate women, and to make them productive members of the working class. Included within this principal mission was the goal of economic, social, and political liberation of women. The *zhenotdely* endeavored to "liberate" women from the patriarchal family, thereby enabling them to become active participants in the revolutionary movement.

Significantly, the *zhenotdely* did not call for a restructuring of private relations or for more involvement of the husband in housework and child care (and the transformation of gender roles which this would have entailed). Such a solution would have left the private, familial sphere intact. Instead, they demanded statist solutions, looking to the Soviet state to direct and fulfill women's domestic duties. Thus, the *zhenotdely* called for the transformation and reduction of the domestic realm as the solution to "liberating" women from "household slavery." In this manner, the reconstitution of the relationship between the public and domestic spheres was essential for the liberation of women: they could not be equal members of society while they were tied to the kitchen hearth. Consequently, women's liberation was a compo-

ment part of the Bolsheviks' goal of increasing the scope of the public sphere and party authority while reducing the private realm in Soviet society.

This study traces changing party conceptions of and policy towards the public and private domains in the years before the Cultural Revolution (1919-1928), focusing upon the *zhenotdely's* attempts to transform the private domestic sphere and to spread party influence among women, goals which were considered crucial for women's liberation and the communalization of society. I am not writing a history of the *Zhenotdel*, the Women's Section of the Communist Party Central Committee located in Moscow (the history of the *Zhenotdel* and its relationship with the party has been well documented by Carol Eubanks Hayden).<sup>6</sup> Rather, via the activities of the *zhenotdely*, I will examine the party's implicit redefinition of and changing policy towards the domestic realm during the 1920s, a policy which was based upon a combination of ideological considerations and the party's need to confront social realities.

For even as the *zhenotdely* attempted to transform the domestic sphere and women's role within it, they had to contend with the women they were nominally leading. As women attempted to carve out a niche for themselves in Soviet society, the *zhenotdely* ultimately had to negotiate with these women where the boundary between the public, private, and domestic realms was to be located. For the response of these women was crucial in shaping the work of the *zhenotdely*; women's acceptance or rejection of *zhenotdely* tenets, their reactions to and, in turn, their influence on the party-state's attempt to redefine the relationship between the public and the familial spheres were reflected in the changing policy of the *zhenotdely*, which altered the meaning of liberation and modified the image of the "new Soviet woman" and her role within Soviet society.

Prior accounts of the *zhenotdely* have focused upon either the success or the failure of these bodies to liberate women. The basic premise of Western scholars is that the party was not truly interested in liberating women, but rather in harnessing their labor for the benefit of the new regime. Because of this, the Women's Sections added significantly to women's burdens outside of the home, while failing to "liberate" women from their secondary status within Soviet society.<sup>7</sup> According to Soviet scholars the *zhenotdely* fulfilled their purpose, having "solved the woman

question" and the issue of women's subordinate position in both the family and the community.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the real historical significance of the *zhenotdely* is not whether they eliminated discrimination or transformed women's social position, but how the *zhenotdely* attempted to redefine and reconstitute the domestic sphere, placing women's traditional family roles under state control. The *zhenotdely* have not been studied from this angle, yet it is an approach which can provide rich insights into both the history of the Women's Sections and the relationship of the party to the public, private, and domestic spheres during the course of the 1920s. It can furthermore contribute to an evaluation of two competing and mutually exclusive paradigms used to conceptualize NEP: the "creeping totalitarianism" paradigm and the concept that NEP was an era of "pluralism."

As this study traces the shifting boundary between the public, private, and domestic spheres, these concepts must be defined at the outset. The public sphere often refers to the governmental realm, but it can be wider than merely the governmental sphere and can refer to the nation or people as a whole as well as to services and activities which aid or otherwise affect a community. In this sense, the *zhenotdely* endeavored to establish public institutions or services, such as nurseries, laundries, and cafeterias, which would not only transform and reduce the domestic sphere, but also serve the working class, especially women.

In a certain sense, the use of the term "public sphere" can be easier to apply in Soviet Russia than in Western democracies as the state endeavored to co-opt or eliminate independent public (but non-governmental or non-party) groups and associations. This is not to say there were no "autonomous social groups that [did] not owe their existence to the state"; as historian Glennys Young persuasively argues regarding the rural clergy under NEP, "representatives of 'civil society'" did not simply disappear, but rather found ways to continue their existence under the new regime.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks *endeavored* to eliminate social structures beyond their control and the bourgeois consciousness such structures produced. With the formation of commissions for agitation and propaganda among women in December 1918 (which became departments, or *otdely*, in August 1919), the party appropriated or disbanded other women's groups, eliminating women's organizations which were not under party authority. Thus, a definition of public as being of or related to the

government, state, or party is applicable to Soviet Russia and the history of the *zhenotdely*; this is how I will use the term.

The private sphere is that which is unrelated to or outside the state and can be a difficult concept to apply to NEP Russia. As the party endeavored to aggrandize the public at the cost of the private realm, boundaries between these spheres were redefined and reconstituted. *Webster's Dictionary* defines "private" and "private sphere" as "carried on by the individual independent of the usual institutions"; this definition can be applied to Soviet Russia if one replaces the word "usual" with the words "party," "state," or "state/party dominated."

The domestic sphere is that realm which concerns the household or the family. This domain is often perceived as a subcategory of the private sphere, but it is not necessarily so. If the family becomes allied with or subordinated to the control of the state, then the definition of "private" as "carried on . . . independent of the usual [state] institutions" no longer applies. As the Bolsheviks endeavored to place the domestic sphere under the tutelage of the party-state, the domestic sphere, at least theoretically, became a sphere of the party.

### **Women's Liberation and the Reduction of the Domestic Sphere, 1918-1921**

The formation of the Women's Section of the Communist Party in August 1919 was the culmination of a two-year effort to establish within the Bolshevik Party a group for educating and organizing women. The majority of party leaders, including many women, were wary of creating a separate organization for women, fearing the division of the working class along lines of gender. Ostensibly, the Bolshevik Party was *the* party of the *entire* working class, regardless of distinction, and many Bolsheviks believed that establishing subsections within the working population would splinter the proletariat. But a small group of female Bolshevik leaders, including Aleksandra Kollontai, Inessa Armand, and Konkordia Samoilova, with the support of Lenin and Ia. M. Sverdlov, stressed the need to have a separate organization for women, whom the Bolsheviks regarded as the most backwards as well as the most oppressed sector of the working class. The *zhenotdely* were thereby established to act as a liaison between the party and women, to enable the party to reach this

"backwards" mass, and via this mass, into the private domestic sphere.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, the existence of these Women's Sections was ideologically troublesome for the Communist Party, serving as a reminder that, although the party claimed to be the representative of the entire working class, a subgroup was nonetheless deemed necessary to help it accomplish its work. Throughout the life of the *zhenotdely*, these bodies were beleaguered by party members who claimed that the *zhenotdely* were potential "feminist deviations" which could split the working class, indeed groups which were unnecessary and even potentially harmful to the party. According to the Bolsheviks, feminism was a "bourgeois" movement which aimed to reform rather than overturn the capitalist system and to give women political and economic rights within that system, which, ultimately, would leave the private familial realm intact. Furthermore, feminism served the interests of the bourgeoisie by dividing the proletariat (along lines of gender), thus weakening the working class movement. Feminism, the Bolsheviks stated, would pit man against woman; in reality, the Bolsheviks were fearful not of women being pitted against men, but of feminists ranging themselves against the party and its goals.

Yet, the realities of early Bolshevik rule—the need to harness all available sources of support during the Civil War and to combat what the party perceived as dwindling support from a disappearing working class—convinced the regime of the need for a special apparatus to organize women in favor of the revolution.<sup>11</sup> The Women's Sections were, therefore, established to meet the needs the party, but also the perceived needs of women, for, as the founders of the *zhenotdely* believed, there could be no difference between these needs. Only communism and the concomitant transformation of the private sphere could lead to the complete emancipation of women, even as the creation of a communist society was impossible without the social, political, and economic liberation of women. Women's emancipation and the construction of communism went hand-in-hand; therefore, women's liberation was a cause of the entire working class. Armand, the first director of the *Zhenotdel* of the Party Central Committee (1919-1920), explained:

Women workers do not have specific female tasks, [they] do not have special interests which differ from the interests of the entire proletariat. . . . All

interests, all conditions of the liberation of women workers are insolubly tied with the victory of the proletariat, are inconceivable without it. And that victory is inconceivable without their [women's] participation, without their struggle.

If at [the First All-Russian Women's] Congress [of November 1918, which laid the basis for the creation of the Women's Sections] such issues as the protection of motherhood and infancy [and] housework were advanced, that was not because these issues are specifically women's issues. . . . All these issues are general, vital issues of socialist construction.<sup>12</sup>

Women's liberation and the transformation of the domestic sphere not only affected women but were the concern of the entire society.

As a result, the *zhenotdely* were in the anomalous position of claiming to be women's groups which did not represent female interests, asserting that women did not have their own concerns isolated from those of the working class as a whole. At the same time, however, the *zhenotdely* had to justify their existence by showing that women were different from the rest of the working class. One of the main differences was that women spent a significant proportion, if not all, of their lives within the private domestic sphere reeking of middle-class values.

Whether it was because the majority of women were uninterested in Marxist theory, because the *zhenotdely* believed that women could not comprehend or were even fearful of such concepts, or, most likely, both, the *zhenotdely* felt that it was essential to approach the majority of women on everyday issues, rather than with abstract ideas and political concepts. Saving their theoretical treatises on the "New Soviet Woman"—an independent entity who rejected traditional family roles to devote her entire existence to the cause of socialism—for pamphlets and publications such as *Kommunistka* which were aimed at communist women and their sympathizers, the *zhenotdely*, fearing that "working class women at best would be indifferent, at worst would be hostile to the criticisms of religion, family, and women's traditional roles implicit in advocacy of complete emancipation . . . presented female emancipation to proletarian women as a package of reforms which would make their lives easier, not

as a program for the total restructuring of their lives."<sup>13</sup> The *zhenotdely* therefore asserted that the party needed to organize women about issues and problems which women encounter on a daily level, issues such as child care and the establishment of communal institutions to liberate women from their domestic chores. Involving women in their own emancipation would draw women into the socialist sphere. Then, after women had been brought into social work outside the home, they would advance from such tasks to further participation in Soviet and party campaigns. "Thanks to our special methods of approaching [women], thanks to 'propaganda by the deed,' these grey peasant women [and] women workers are steadily brought into all areas of Soviet construction, starting with the smallest: organizing nurseries, children's cafeterias . . . [and] learning from that work, [they] grow, expand their horizons and walk still further and further."<sup>14</sup>

As such emphasis on women's domestic roles illustrates, the *zhenotdely's* definition of "women's interests" or "concerns" revolved about the home and women's position as wife and mother, including issues of child care, cooking, cleaning, and other household related matters. Liberation from household chores and economic independence from the male breadwinner were considered vital components of "women's interests," as was the right to protective services, such as the "protection of motherhood and infancy" and the "protection of female labor." Furthermore, as the liberation of women hinged upon the creation of state institutions to relieve women of domestic duties, the transformation of the domestic sphere and traditional familial relations were also considered of importance to Russian women. But the *zhenotdely's* definition of women's concerns did not stop at the door to the family home and included women's right to employment, to receive a wage on par with that of men, and to be active participants in economic, Soviet, and other public activities—in other words, to be part of the public, party-state dominated realm.

In this manner, a vital component of women's "liberation" was the *increase* of party influence among and power over women. Women were ultimately viewed as the political objects of party policy and their emancipation a means to penetrate the private domestic sphere and further the cause of socialist transformation.<sup>15</sup>

The Soviet Family Code of 1918 (enacted before the creation of the *zhenotdely*) was the first step taken by the Bolsheviks to re-define the relationship between the public and the domestic spheres and to attain equality between the sexes within the marriage bond. In addition to substituting marriages at civil registries (ZAGS) for religious ceremonies and guaranteeing the absolute right of divorce, this law no longer obliged a woman to adopt the husband's surname or to follow him should he change place of residence, underscoring that the wife was not the husband's "possession." Women no longer needed their fathers' or spouses' permission to hold a job or obtain an education. Legitimate and illegitimate children attained equality before the law, and even women who never married the father could sue for child support. The code also banned adoption, calling on the state to raise orphaned and homeless children. Moreover, this law restricted the economic functions of the family by outlawing the inheritance of property (though in practice, the regime allowed people to retain an inheritance of up to ten thousand rubles) and by declaring that no community of property was to be formed between marriage partners. In this manner, family property was replaced by individual incomes which "deprived the family of the possibility of self-support in cases of emergency and of self-provision for old age," making the individual members dependent upon the state for social services and protective functions once left exclusively to the family.<sup>16</sup>

Based loosely upon the ideas of Marx and Engels, who had called for freedom of divorce and transformation of the domestic sphere as a means to both liberate women and undermine one of the main pillars of bourgeois society, the 1918 code was also influenced by the ideas of Aleksandra Kollontai, a leading Bolshevik theorist on the "woman question" and the second director of the Central *Zhenotdel* (1920-1922), who helped to draft the legislation. Kollontai believed that the domestic sphere had to be fundamentally transformed and that the Soviet state was beholden to shoulder women's familial duties by building public institutions which would allow women to leave, completely, their domestic jail. Furthermore, she decried the hypocritical institution of marriage and the sexual double standard by which men were free to engage in sexual relations while women had to bear the consequences of such unions; she called on the state to raise children.

Kollontai's conception of women's liberation as well as party theory and the ideas of Marx and Engels all contributed to the drafting of the family code; yet the relationship between these influences is difficult to distinguish for differences among them were not distinctly discernible in the early years of Bolshevik rule. Even as Kollontai's influence on the marriage code can be seen in the ban on adoption (i.e., calling on the state to raise at least part, if not all, of the children) and the removal of illegitimacy as a legal category, she also acknowledged that "our Soviet marriage law (of 1918), separated from the Church to be sure, is not essentially more progressive than the same laws that after all exist in other progressive democratic countries."<sup>17</sup> In her view, this code left the family, and therefore the domestic sphere, intact, while the upbringing of children remained, for the most part, within the family.

Kollontai's misgivings notwithstanding, one of the most important aspects of the 1918 legislation was the attempt, no matter how limited, to reduce the familial sphere to the most meager of functions—the cohabitation of the partners involved, with, perhaps, the children—while encouraging the members of this unit to look to the state for support. For in reducing its economic functions and removing its "exploitative character"<sup>18</sup> the state accepted obligations once left to the family, including not only care for the health and safety of its populace, but also women's domestic duties, thereby increasing (at least *de jure*) the role of the public sphere in the family life of citizens.

While their ideas influenced the 1918 Family Code tangentially, three crucial points from the writings of Marx and Engels (as expressed in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*) served as the basis for the *zhenotdely's* theory on women's liberation. First and foremost, in order to be economically and socially independent from their husbands and to attain an equal position within the family and society, women needed the ability to earn a wage, i.e., to hold a job. Beyond paid employment, the *zhenotdely* also stressed the necessity for women to take part in "productive life" in a broad sense and to participate in *Soviet forms* of social organization: to take part in soviet and union activities, to become members of soviet, union, and cooperative bodies, and even enter the ranks of the party. Second, to be able to hold a job, women had to be relieved of their family duties, which would be accomplished through the socialization of housework and the

communal supervision of children, in other words, the creation of state or public institutions which would fulfill such domestic chores. And, lastly, once women became independent, the family would become superfluous and "wither away."

Though seen as crucial to women's liberation and the establishment of a communist society, the "withering away of the family" did not have a resolute meaning among the Bolsheviks. For the majority it meant "the end of the family as it is now known," in other words, the elimination of the traditional, patriarchal family based upon women's subjugation and the creation of a "comradely union" between equal partners. Some Bolsheviks took a more strident position, especially concerning the raising of children, calling not only for public creches, but for total communal rearing. Such methods of child raising, its advocates argued, would not only liberate women, but would also instill in the younger generations loyalty to the collective rather than the nuclear family and allegiance to the regime. Kollontai, for example, did not demand the communal raising of children, but she did want parents to have the option to have their children brought up in communal institutions; this, she argued, would not only liberate women, but would prove the value of such rearing, convincing all parents to let the state care for the young.

The Bolsheviks did agree, however, that housework was a waste of energy, stultifying, tedious, unproductive work which eats up women's creative potential and, most importantly, was not profitable for the state. Liberation could only begin when women were free to fulfill their creative potential, to work constructively without being preoccupied by nonproductive household activities. In other words, liberation was founded upon women's ability to add to the wealth of the state, which could only be achieved via gainful employment. Therefore, the creation and expansion of state or communal institutions, such as public laundries, nurseries, and cafeterias designed to relieve women of their household chores, was vital for the liberation of women, enabling them to take part in the productive life of the Soviet and thereby raising them from their secondary position in society. Furthermore, the creation of such local, small-scale services would transform the domestic sphere and introduce communal principles into the daily lives of the populace.<sup>19</sup> Lenin wrote that "the real emancipation of woman, [in] real communism begins only where and when begins a massive struggle . . .

against petty housework, or, rather, a massive reconstruction [*perestroika*] of housework into large scale socialist housekeeping [*krupnoe sotsialisticheskoe khoziaistvo*].<sup>20</sup> Housework was to be turned into a socialist enterprise, no different than other state enterprises, and placed under the control of the communist regime. Hence, a critical element for the liberation of women (as the *zhenotdely* initially defined it) was the reconstruction of family life and the transfer of women's household chores to the state, goals which hinged upon the transformation and, ultimately, the reduction of the domestic sphere. These goals, it must be noted, would also expand the public sphere and the realm of party-state authority.

Gregory Massell, in his monograph on the *zhenotdely* in Central Asia, contends that the Women's Sections, backed by the Bolshevik Party, used women's liberation to break traditional lines of authority; these bodies aspired to create a cadre of women loyal to the communist regime which would tear asunder the clan-based, patriarchal society of Central Asia, making it more malleable to Bolshevik designs.<sup>21</sup> This analysis can also be applied to Soviet Russia, where the Bolshevik regime endeavored to replace family loyalties with overarching loyalty to the regime. The Bolsheviks passed protective legislation for women and provided services, such as health care or aid for mothers and their children, which were once left to the family, thus assuring that women looked to the state, not to their husbands or families, for support. In other words, the Bolsheviks tried to make women dependent on the regime and thereby assure that women's loyalty was first and foremost to the Soviet state. The attitude of patriarchal protection over women assumed by the regime, besides running counter to the professed goal of the *zhenotdely* to create an active, independent, and equal "communist woman," also increased Bolshevik control over the women themselves and over the domestic sphere, chipping away at privileges (as well as duties) once left to the individual family.

In this manner, motherhood was no longer to be defined as a private or familial decision, but was to be regulated for the good of "the collective." Since they served to enrich the nation by physically increasing the working class, motherhood and reproduction were labeled social functions. Kollontai designated "maternity a 'social-state concern'," and asserted that while pregnant, "a woman 'no longer belongs to herself.'"<sup>22</sup> Abortion, while

legal, was provided not on demand, but by approval of the regime. Significantly, the legalization of abortion was not part of the original legislation on the family enacted in 1918. The act legalizing abortion was passed in 1920, spurred in part by material circumstances: the inability of single women, and even some families, to support their children as well as the large number of *besprizorniki*, homeless children who roamed the country, often turning to crime for survival.<sup>23</sup> Yet, perhaps the major impetus for the legalization of abortion was the fact that many women were having abortions anyway, using traditional, often dangerous methods and turning to *babki* and other unofficial sources.

In order to combat these traditional methods and to lower the number of deaths which ensued from such "unscientific" techniques, the Soviet regime made abortion legally available. But as the wording of the 1920 decree on abortion illustrates, this service was not intended to be a permanent right bestowed upon women; rather, the legalization of abortion was to be a temporary concession and an operation which the Soviet state vehemently opposed.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government is conscious of the serious evil [of underground abortions] to the community. It combats this evil by propaganda against abortions among working women. By working for socialism, and by introducing the protection of maternity and infancy on an extensive scale, it feels assured of achieving the gradual disappearance of this evil. But as the moral survivals of the past and the difficult economic conditions of the present still compel many women to resort to this operation, the People's Commissariats of Health and Justice, anxious to protect the health of the women and considering that the method of repression in this field fails entirely to achieve this aim have decided [to make abortion legal].<sup>24</sup>

Notably, this decree was written from the perspective of "the collective," looking out for the good of the community, rather than protecting the choice of individual women.

To receive an abortion, a woman had to apply to a "troika," a commission made up of a member of the local soviet, a doctor,

and one or two female delegates. These "troikas" regulated abortions, taking into account the woman's "physical condition, [her] material, domestic, and social position." A meeting of the *zhenotdely* collegium of Vasileostrovskii raion in Petrograd, when announcing the new legislation on abortion, stated that "Moscow has decided in *exceptional* cases to perform abortions in hospitals. . . . If a woman is ill or because of her socio-economic conditions cannot give birth, she should be given the opportunity to have an abortion."<sup>25</sup> Abortion was not a right, nor was it a personal choice, at least not fully, but a privilege bestowed upon women by permission of the state. In this manner, the regime endeavored to monitor the behavior of women. Liberation did not mean complete freedom of action. In fact, liberation was to be achieved, according to the Bolsheviks, only as women were placed under the custody of the state.

Nevertheless, the decree on abortion, which placed the interests of the state above those of women, also illustrates how women were able to influence the regime; through their actions, i.e., by seeking underground abortions, women compelled the regime to comply with their desire to have abortion as an available alternative. Even as the party and the *zhenotdely* attempted to direct and ultimately control women's behaviors, women also had leverage, obliging the regime to contend with their actions.

### NEP and the Changing Meaning of Liberation, 1921-1924

The New Economic Policy (NEP) has traditionally been characterized as a "strategic retreat to capitalism," a time when the state receded from the economic sphere, allowing small- and medium-scale manufacture and retail trade to flourish, even as, politically, the party became more centralized, abolishing all internal dissent with the 1921 "ban on factions."<sup>26</sup> This analysis, besides imparting an over-simplified impression that NEP was a coherently planned policy, does not give a complete picture of Soviet Russia and the party during the 1920s. For even as a private economic market reemerged under NEP, the Bolsheviks endeavored to reduce independent social forces and increase party control of and influence over the private realms of social and familial relations. Just as they tightened control within the party, the Bolsheviks aspired to increase their authority over society, combating autonomous forces—which, in the social realm as in

the economic, they associated with chaos, spontaneity, and "bourgeois influences"—by aggrandizing the public, state-dominated realm and reducing the role of private activity. The domestic sphere, that "nest of bourgeois corruption," was one of the primary areas targeted.

In the years before NEP, women were making rapid advances in the work force. As their numbers expanded, women entered industrial sectors, such as machine and metal works, where they had not been prior to World War I and the Civil War. By 1920 they comprised forty-six per cent of the workers in heavy industry, and "in Petrograd, women held sixty-five per cent of all civilian jobs."<sup>27</sup> With the introduction of NEP factories, no longer subsidized by the state, switched to a system of cost accounting; excess workers were laid off, and many factories closed. Unemployment rose, even as the number of those seeking work expanded, affecting female workers to a greater degree than male workers. By the end of 1921, women comprised approximately thirty-five per cent of the work force (a figure noticeably less than the forty to fifty per cent female labor force during the Civil War), but made up over half of the unemployed.<sup>28</sup> Even as female unemployment soared, social and protective services for women and children were cut.

Under these circumstances, the year 1921-22 was a period of crisis and turmoil within the *zhenotdely*. Disappointed by the conditions of NEP, many *zhenotdely* workers simply withdrew from work among women.<sup>29</sup> Work with women also suffered. The main form of direct organizing and educational work among women was the delegate meeting, a gathering of elected female delegates, which was designed to involve women in party-state activities.<sup>30</sup> With the commencement of NEP, the number of women involved in these meetings declined. For example, in one region of Petrograd, the number of women involved in *zhenotdely* activities fell from between three hundred fifty and three hundred seventy-five delegates in the beginning of 1921 to approximately two hundred by the middle of that year; the number was even lower in mid-1922 (one hundred fifty-six women).<sup>31</sup> Disappointed, disillusioned, and often unemployed, women who were initially involved in the Women's Sections withdrew from participation in *zhenotdely* work, but it is not known who were involved and in what numbers.

At this time a number of women in the *zhenotdely*, for the

most part at the local level, called for the liquidation of the Women's Sections, arguing that under the conditions of NEP, as female unemployment soared and public services were cut, work with women was severely impaired and liberation impossible to achieve. M. Reiser, the head of the Women's Section in Belorussia, angrily wrote that under current economic and social conditions, the *zhenotdely* were no longer viable entities.

Until now our task has been to draw the broad masses of women into production. . . . It is not necessary to speak now of broadening the networks of institutions of social upbringing, of maternal and infant protection, of organizing communal economies, etc. [Instead] we are witnesses to the following: the cells of communist construction which we created are being destroyed; women workers are being thrown out of the factories under the staff layoffs exclusively because they are women. . . . We stand before the fact that an enormous proportion of the women workers are being thrown onto the streets where they will be forced to turn to prostitution as a form of income. . . . I personally find that the current conditions negate the very existence of the women workers' section; at the very least they make this work extremely difficult and ineffectual.<sup>32</sup>

V. Gurvich, a party organizer from the Kuban region, was even more adamant in her position, stating that "the more we gain experience working among women under the conditions of NEP in the Kuban region the stronger our conclusion that neither our party organization nor the working mass of regional women would lose anything if the women's sections were liquidated."<sup>33</sup> In May 1922, Sofiia Smidovich, director of the Central *Zhenotdel* from 1922 to 1924, spoke of "liquidationist moods," disillusionment at the local level, and a general sense of crisis in the Women's Sections.<sup>34</sup>

Mirroring the frustration verbalized by many lower level *zhenotdely* cadres, Kollontai labeled NEP "the New Threat." As women increasingly joined the ranks of the unemployed, she argued, they were losing their economic independence, the opportunity to be productively employed, and, hence, their ability to

attain an equal social position.

It seemed that we already long ago were heading toward the future in the realm of *byt*, at least concerning the principle of equality of the sexes, that the past enslavement of women to the family and [her] past material dependence on the husband would no longer be spoken of in the Soviet government.

But with the introduction of the new policy in the area of the economy, the picture is quickly changing.<sup>35</sup>

Without a job, she wrote, women had two alternatives, to become prostitutes or return to the domestic sphere; either way "a woman again looks to the man for material support." Women and men could no longer be equal comrades, and women were returned to their secondary, dependent position within a traditional, patriarchal domestic sphere.<sup>36</sup>

Clearly, Kollontai and Reiser, as well as other women who shared their point of view, believed that wage labor was key to women's liberation; without an income of their own, women could not attain equality, but rather, would remain dependent upon either their husbands or their pimps.<sup>37</sup> In their view, complete social emancipation of women would occur only when women had attained economic independence. While the creation of state institutions to relieve women of their domestic duties was important, such institutions would not fundamentally alter the position of women if they did not have financial autonomy, for without such economic self-sufficiency, they would remain reliant upon the male breadwinner and imprisoned within the private domestic sphere. Other issues, such as the transformation of the relationship between the sexes and family life, would flow from women's new position; *byt* did not need to be consciously transformed, for it would be recast as a result of the revolution and the economic liberation of women. Yet, under NEP, as female jobless rate continued to rise, women were losing their economic independence.<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, under these circumstances of high unemployment and continued dependency on the husband's wage, the *zhenotdely* began to pay greater attention to *byt*, to the need to consciously shape the domestic sphere and to increase the leverage of the

*zhenotdely* in this realm. Because women were no longer able to hold a job, because their social position was not improving as the *zhenotdely* had previously assumed it would, the *zhenotdely* instituted a policy of consciously recasting *byt*; they wanted to make sure that women did not return into the individual home beyond party control. Thus, in 1922 the *zhenotdely* promulgated the "construction of a socialist *byt*." "From here flows the next assignment—the changing of the *byt* of male and female workers—the replacement of the individual family with the social family."<sup>39</sup>

Consequently, even as voices at the local level called for the liquidation of the *zhenotdely*, top *zhenotdely* and party leaders, including Kollontai, asserted that under the conditions of NEP, the Women's Sections were all the more vital and ought to be strengthened rather than liquidated. As the number of unemployed women mounted, women were forced to "retreat" to the family hearth, returning to a private familial sphere of petit-bourgeois social relations, where they were "torn apart from the active life of their class."<sup>40</sup> Under these circumstances, the party feared the resurrection and spread of bourgeois social relations. If left alone within the domestic sphere, working women would become declassed, they would fall out of the party's sphere of authority, and worst of all, they could then effect (or, perhaps, it is better to say, infect) their husbands and children, planting the seeds of bourgeois contagion throughout the working class.<sup>41</sup> As Smidovich stated in early 1923:

The petit-bourgeois family, strengthened with NEP, is the basic cell of the petit-bourgeois strata, which to a significant degree surrounds the woman worker. This petit-bourgeois surrounding creates the basis for the penetration of bourgeois ideology into the proletarian *byt*.<sup>42</sup>

To combat revived capitalist influences, the *zhenotdely* and the party in general called for work among women to expand and to assume new methods and approaches to women. Kollontai, at the end of 1921, in her position as director of the Women's Sections, called on the *zhenotdely* "to use all practical possibilities to draw laboring women into active Soviet construction."<sup>43</sup> A joint circular issued by Vera Golubeva and V. M. Molotov, the first deputy director of the Central *Zhenotdel* and the Secretary of the Central Committee, directed the *zhenotdely* to continue to work

with and hold sway over the many women who were no longer working, active members of the laboring proletariat, "to keep and deepen [the party's] influence on [these] women, drawing them in all sorts of ways into active participation in Soviet construction."<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, to maintain party influence over women even as they withdrew from the work force, *zhenotdely* work and women's liberation took on a broader meaning. Under NEP, as many women became unemployed, the *zhenotdely's* definition of liberation, or at least the means by which to obtain that liberation, shifted. While employment and the ability to earn a wage remained important, the *zhenotdely* began to place greater emphasis on women's participation in social work, in activities at workers' clubs, and in Soviet and party campaigns. In other words, emphasis was now placed upon being a productive and active member of society in general and liberation was possible for those who participated in social activities, i.e., in institutions of *Soviet participation*, which would then develop a socialist consciousness among women, regardless of their employment status. At this time, in 1922/23, archival records from the Women's Section of Vasileostrovskii raion in Petrograd reveal a slowly increasing contingent of housewives participating in the delegate meetings, but whether these women were former workers forced to return to the home under NEP is unknown.<sup>45</sup>

A year before his death, in January 1923, Lenin wrote a tract, "On Cooperation," in which he asserted that Soviet society could grow into socialism under the auspices of NEP. "All we actually need under NEP is to organize the population of Russia in cooperative societies on a sufficiently large scale," Lenin wrote. The organization of society into cooperatives could be done without force; what was needed, according to Lenin, was a "cultural revolution."

Strictly speaking, there is "only" one thing we have left to do and that is to make our people so "enlightened" that they understand all the advantages of everybody participating in the work of the cooperatives. . . . There are no other devices needed to advance to socialism. But to achieve this "only," there must be a veritable revolution—the entire people must go through a period of cultural development.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, according to Lenin, socialism could be attained under current political and economic conditions; it could arise out of the capitalism of NEP. Yet, by the end of 1923, the goal of communist utopia appeared more distant from present reality.

For the Bolsheviks, the "scissors crisis" of mid-1923 underscored the petit-bourgeois, capitalist mentality of the peasantry, as well as the fact that the party lacked control over the countryside. The peasantry was not becoming "enlightened" as Lenin had predicted. Furthermore, capitalist elements, kulaks, nepmen, and even prostitutes, were becoming ever more active under NEP.<sup>47</sup> Although the leading sectors of the party were not ready to abandon NEP, they realized that, if left unchecked, bourgeois influences and social corruption would spread. Like the Women's Sections, the party itself began to pursue a policy of influencing *byt*, of attempting to combat the spread of capitalist social relations.

Thus, the Soviet regime endeavored to organize and structure (more so than it had before) the population's leisure time. The regime urged people to use this time to be productive and aid the regime, rather than spend it ensconced within the private, narrow, complacent realms of friend and family. Outside of work, the *zhenotdely* encouraged women to take part in "production meetings," to study at the *rabfak* or join a political literacy circle. They coaxed women to go to the local workers' club, if only to join a sewing circle, where the *zhenotdely* would lead political discussions while the women did their needlework.<sup>48</sup> Urban women were induced to participate in the *shestvo*, or patronage movement, visiting the countryside to teach their peasant sisters the advantages of communism and to show them the latest techniques in infant care. Even vacation time was not a time of rest, for the *zhenotdely* encouraged urban women going to the countryside for holiday to proselytize the word of Bolshevism and use their time in the village to help establish summer nurseries or tell the peasant woman about the wonders of electricity. The *zhenotdely* were known to hold courses on how best to use vacation time in the countryside.<sup>49</sup>

Even how and where one lived were no longer personal decisions, but were to be decided for the good of "the collective." Noting that in a recent campaign for the establishment of workers' dormitories and other communal living facilities "workers and their wives and even women workers [did] not give the

proper attention to the organization of worker dormitories," the *zhenotdely* urged the working class of Moscow to be an example, to show how people should live:

Red Moscow in every sense ought to become an indicator. The Moscow male and female worker ought to teach everyone not only how to be good revolutionaries, steadfast soldiers, honest masters, but also ought to show, to prove with each step of their home life that we are breaking with the old slave-like forms, habits, and exit onto the path of communism.<sup>50</sup>

Society was to place private life on display, to prove that it was living in accord with the wishes of the party. Life was being transformed, the private realm and domestic life were being placed under a microscope, and no sectors of society were free from this inspection. The result was the reduction (or at least, the intended reduction) of the private sphere and the increase of party power over these domains. The party was striving to expand its presence in the "private life" of Soviet citizens.

Yet, the "creeping totalitarianism" paradigm<sup>51</sup>—the idea that even in the 1920s the party was beginning to reveal its authoritarian nature which was to fully mature under Stalin—does not adequately explain how and why the work of the *zhenotdely* changed during the course of the 1920s, for it ignores some of the most important actors in the history of the Women's Sections, that is, the women themselves. While the party certainly circumscribed the *zhenotdely*, bringing the Women's Sections under tighter party control,<sup>52</sup> (as did the *zhenotdely* circumscribe themselves, by claiming that women's liberation could occur only via communism, under the direction of the Communist Party), this view is oversimplified; it does not address how the women themselves influenced the work of the *zhenotdely*. For even as the party and the *zhenotdely* attempted to reconstruct the mores and behaviors of women, women also had leverage, compelling the regime to react to women's actions (or inaction) and forcing the *zhenotdely* and the party to alter their strategies.<sup>53</sup>

Even as funds for state-sponsored services were cut, the *zhenotdely* continued to place great emphasis (perhaps even greater than before) on the need to create public services which would liberate women from household chores and help to build

communism on a local level. As Smidovich explained:

The Communist Party fights petit-bourgeois influence on the proletariat by means of an intensification of pure proletarian revolutionary ideology. But at the base of the struggle ought to lie, in connection with the work of resurrecting large-scale production, persistent practical work organizing the *byt* of the working class on a socialist basis. This process was strongly moved forward in the first period of the revolution, [but] with NEP it ceased and in some areas was reversed. We ought not to be reconciled with this. If the government for now lacks the means to extend the network of institutions which organize *byt* on a social basis, then the task temporarily ought to be placed on other organs . . . . We know quite well that only communism will bring the full solution to the task of women's liberation . . . . [But] every opened nursery, every opened cafeteria under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat lays a new stone in the base of the building we are erecting.<sup>54</sup>

Under the conditions of NEP, as women returned to the home, the establishment of communal services would transform the domestic sphere and introduce communism into the daily lives of the people.

According to the pronouncements of the *zhenotdely* leadership, one of the largest burdens on women was the daily preparation of meals, which squandered time not only cooking, but also standing in line for groceries. Food, they argued, could be prepared with less time expenditure per person when it was done en masse. Women, they contended, had so little free time to participate in social activities outside the home because "over [them] hangs the damnation of the kitchen stove." Since the bulk of women's domestic burdens revolved about the cooking of family meals, a "revolution" in the kitchen was vital for the liberation of women. "The liberation of woman from the masses . . . of petty concerns starts exactly with the kitchen, which most of all takes up her time, most of all prevents her from becoming a fully valued citizen of the Socialist Soviet Republic."<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, ad-

vocates of public kitchens asserted, communal dining facilities could easily obtain the latest technology in food preparation as well as the most up-to-date nutritional data, allowing for better, healthier meals than those cooked at home by individual women. Yet, despite the proclaimed advantages of communal eateries and other facilities, women proved reluctant to use them. "If women in general . . . are convinced that the social raising of children is necessary . . . they do not look at other forms of organizing life on a social basis in the same way. . . . [In addition to public kitchens] other forms of communal organization of *byt*, like laundries, repair workshops, bakeries, etc., almost completely do not attract the attention of the woman worker."<sup>56</sup> Despite the importance placed on the creation of communal or state institutions both for the liberation of women and the communalization of society, few women were induced to use these services.

Thus, by the beginning of 1923, as women were increasingly separated from the party dominated public sphere, new methods and new approaches to women were employed. The principle form of *zhenotdely* organizing and educational work had been the delegate meeting, which was based at the factory or other place of employment. Urban women who participated most in the delegate meeting in the early 1920s tended to be younger factory workers, usually employed at state-run enterprises; they were typically literate, at least to some degree, often with higher than average (for women) job qualifications.<sup>57</sup> It appears, therefore, that women who were most responsive to the *zhenotdely's* message of liberation and public participation, at least in the first years of the Soviet regime, were factory workers who sought skilled work, in other words, those women who competed with men, at least in the job market. It is probable that such women were supportive, at least to some degree, of *zhenotdely* endeavors to establish communal institutions which would relieve them of household chores and, in this manner, tacitly supported the transformation and even the reduction of the domestic sphere, although collaborative evidence from the women themselves is needed.

But as female unemployment grew, it became increasingly necessary to reach women beyond the place of work. To do this, the *zhenotdely* expanded their publishing activities, attempting to reach women outside the factory via the printed word. While *Kommunistka*, the "theoretical" journal designed to advise *zhenot-*

dely workers, had been published since 1920, other, more "popular" and accessible titles, such as *Rabotnitsa*, *Delegatka*, and *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, which were aimed at all women, began publication in early 1923. The journal *Rabotnitsa* was not a new publication; it had been published for a short time in 1914, before the outbreak of World War I, when it was closed by the tsarist government. It was later revived in 1917-18, after the February Revolution. Yet, the 1920s version of this journal was significantly different from its predecessor. The original format was along the lines of a newspaper such as *Pravda*; while some articles were aimed towards women, it generally covered news and political events. When it was brought back again by the Central Zhenotdel, the revised *Rabotnitsa* devoted little space to political events, but rather used its pages to dispense advice to women, including mothers and homemakers.<sup>58</sup> This journal and other such "popular" titles were distributed through single or joint subscriptions and were also made available in workers' clubs and at the village reading room [*izba-chital'nia*].

Via these journals, the *zhenotdely* endeavored to reach out to women beyond the place of work, to enter the home and to influence and transform the domestic realm, thereby increasing the party's control over this nest of bourgeois social relations. As a 1923 editorial in the first issue of the revived and revamped *Rabotnitsa* asserted, the "Women's pages" which had been published periodically in party and state papers were no longer meeting the needs of women—nor, it must be noted, the needs of the regime.

In the conditions of the new economic policy, old social relations, which are the cradle of female slavery, are reviving themselves and are striving to become stronger. In light of this, the fundamental task of our magazine is to endeavor, against the background of the world-wide struggle of the proletariat for communism, with all measures, to aid the organized opposition of the female proletariat against the pernicious influence of petty bourgeois elements.<sup>59</sup>

The task of the *zhenotdely* (and the party) was now to pay greater attention to *byt*, to the conscious shaping of the domestic sphere. Their goal was to increase party presence within and influence

over the familial realm and combat the perceived recrudescence of bourgeois social relations.

Yet, this new policy of paying greater attention to the domestic sphere and the concomitant use of the press to penetrate that realm in turn affected the work of the *zhenotdely*. For as we shall see, to maintain their titular position as leader and teacher of Soviet women, the *zhenotdely* had to refine their approach to women; they had to alter where and how they were to reach women and how they attempted to influence and ultimately recast the domestic sphere.

### **The Morality of Domesticity, 1925-1928**

By the mid-1920s changing party policies engendered changing conceptions of the family, the domestic sphere, and their roles in Soviet society. The goal of transforming of women's domestic duties into a socialist enterprise, carried to its logical end, would have meant the reduction and possible elimination of the domestic sphere, and some Bolsheviks had even welcomed the disintegration of the family unit. But as the party started to pay more attention to the intimate details of the population's personal activities and private life, it came to view the family as a bulwark against social corruption; no longer was the traditional family structure perceived as a source of bourgeois contagion, but rather as a shield against the moral decay of society.

Economics had an important role in rendering this new, positive view of the family in Soviet society, for the state simply did not have the funds to build communal institutions and provide public services on a level to accommodate the entire population; in other words, it proved unable to replace the economic and welfare functions of the family unit. Another reason for the party's changing conception of the family was that, after years of turmoil, society was in shambles. Homeless children were wandering the streets, even as dilapidated orphanages were filled to capacity;<sup>60</sup> a large number of women, unemployed and often abandoned, turned to petty crime and prostitution for survival.<sup>61</sup> Under these circumstances, a solid marriage and functional family life came to be perceived as a stabilizing force in a morally decaying society and a vital necessity for the establishment of a productive populace.

But it was not party politics alone which engendered the

changing policy towards the domestic sphere and the increased attention to the role of women within that realm. Whereas further collaborative evidence from editorial meetings is necessary, the fact that the popular women's press began publication in 1923 *before* the party's altered view of the domestic sphere was acknowledged, at least openly, implies that the *zhenotdely* were responding to more than party policy; they were reacting to women's desire to retain the domestic sphere and their position within it. For in order to reach the masses of unemployed women now ensconced within the domestic realm and to make them part of the party's sphere of influence the *zhenotdely* began to approach women within that sphere, a tactic which would enable the party to *penetrate* the domestic sphere. In other words, the Women's Sections began reaching into the domestic arena rather than coercing women out of it—an approach designed not to *appease* or *accommodate* women, but to *draw* them into the socialist sector.<sup>62</sup>

In its efforts to mold a new society, the party had to contend with pre-revolutionary social patterns and behaviors, traditional attitudes which were *not* reconstructed as a result of the revolution. Attitudes which, moreover, existed even within the party, especially at the lower levels,<sup>63</sup> and may have been increased as a result of the influx of workers and peasants into the party during the Lenin Levy of 1924. At this time, the number of women's organizers of worker or other lower class origins in the *zhenotdely* increased; for example, of 179 women's organizers in Leningrad in 1925, 174 were workers, "80 per cent of [whom] had entered the party in the . . . Lenin Levy."<sup>64</sup>

A component part of party efforts to combat traditional "bourgeois" values and inculcate Soviet society with the "proper" mores and behavior was the establishment of various voluntary groups and associations, the spread of which "assumed impressive variety and vigor" in the mid-1920s.<sup>65</sup> Organizations, such as *Osoaviakhim* (the Society of Friends of Defense and Aviation-Chemical Construction) or the more politically and culturally charged League of Militant Godless, were designed to enhance party presence in potentially non-political arenas, for they served "to draw people away from other affiliations [and] to entice them to accept new attitudes or acquire new skills."<sup>66</sup> Via the power of discourse, persuasion, and social pressure, such affiliations were fashioned to manipulate the population's sentiments and actions: "The mass voluntary image . . . serve[d] to persuade potential re-

cruits to accept its values and aims, to commit their personal resources to its purposes. . . . The leadership seeks to gain support for values and goals by exploiting man's gregarious and conforming nature,"<sup>67</sup> thereby obtaining "mass acceptance of the center's value allocations."<sup>68</sup> These organizations were perceived as a means to combat spontaneous social developments, to erase former cultural patterns, and to structure the workers' free time for productive purposes; they were an attempt "to organize the mass, to change an undifferentiated and unreliable citizenry into a structured, readily accessible public."<sup>69</sup> As with the *zhenotdely*, the party in general was striving to penetrate "private realms" and to fashion them into spheres of party influence, in other words, to deprivatize these realms. Such "voluntary organizations" were, thus, a reaction to social realities and an attempt to combat pre-revolutionary behaviors. The *zhenotdely's* increased attention to and structuring of women's activities within the domestic sphere was part of this policy which aimed to reduce, reconstitute, and usurp the private and the domestic spheres.

Yet, even as the party attempted to mold behavior, shape opinion, and reconstitute the private and domestic spheres via discourse and the calculated use of social pressure, in other words, by instructing the people how to conduct themselves within the new Soviet state, women compelled the *zhenotdely* to alter their approach if not their goal of transforming the domestic sphere. In order to reach into the domestic sphere, women obliged the *zhenotdely* not only to accept the family as the primary unit of society, but also the traditional role of women in that family unit. Nevertheless, the amended policy of encouraging women to fulfill domestic chores fit comfortably with the *zhenotdely's* new, wider conception that liberation was possible regardless of employment. And by instructing women how to conduct themselves within the domestic sphere, the party was able to increase its presence in this realm. Theoretically, the domestic sphere was thereby changed from a realm of free choice and private activity to an arena of party influence, and the "new Soviet Woman" was now, implicitly, a productive worker, both in the house and in society.

Even as the *zhenotdely* began to pay more attention to the conscious reconstruction of *byt*, they were limited both by the party, which called for increased control over the Women's Sections, and by financial constraints, which curtailed their ability to

build communal services. In order to circumvent these limitations, the *zhenotdely* looked to the printed word to extend party influence over the domestic sphere, a tactic which, in turn, altered the work of the *zhenotdely*. Although the Women's Sections continued to call for the creation of communal institutions to liberate women from the home, the "popular" women's press, magazines such as *Rabotnitsa* and the women's journal of the Leningrad oblast, *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, regularly featured sewing patterns (and not just for women's clothes but items for the entire family), advice columns to mothers, and articles educating women on hygiene and the need for cleanliness in the home. In other words, these magazines *taught* and *encouraged* women to perform domestic roles.

Such articles helped spread party influence into areas once considered private: the party was now telling women what to wear, how to care for their children, and how they should clean the house, thereby enhancing party authority over decisions once left to the discretion of the woman and the family. But such journal articles and features also indicate a shift in the work of the *zhenotdely*. In order to enter the home and thereby influence the domestic sphere, the *zhenotdely* press had to attract subscribers—it had to appeal to women, which it did by offering useful advice to women and helping them with their household duties, rather than by transferring such duties to the state. Hence, even as the *zhenotdely* continued to call for the creation of communal institutions and to publish appeals for the liberation of women from the domestic hearth, they also instructed women on the proper means to fulfill household chores. In this manner, rather than eradicating the domestic realm by turning it into a "state socialist enterprise," the Women's Sections tacitly accepted the domestic sphere and women's role within it.

Indeed, by 1924-25, the *zhenotdely* press began to include recipes, hints on the best methods of washing clothes, and, in 1925, *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka* began to carry a regular section on "housekeeping" [*domovodstvo*] and "help to the housewife," giving advice and useful tips on sewing, cooking, and cleaning. This increased attention to housework was part of the Bolsheviks' endeavors to create a productive populace and was an important component in their striving for organized efficiency "every moment of the day," even in private life, indicating that now even "unproductive" housework, the housewife, and the household it-

self were to be disciplined according to the Bolsheviks' quasi-Taylorist conception of time, space, and efficiency.<sup>70</sup> In this manner, by printing such articles, the *zhenotdely* did accomplish its goal of spreading party influence over the private, domestic sphere. But to do this, the *zhenotdely* had to acknowledge rather than reduce the domestic sphere and women's role in it, which, instead of lifting the burden of household drudgery off women, may have, contrary to the *zhenotdely's* professed goals, created additional burdens on women; women were now instructed how to productively conduct housework and what schedule they ought follow in their household routine. Nonetheless, the fundamental goal of women's liberation (as defined by the *zhenotdely*) was not to decrease women's "burdens" but to make them *productive* members of the working proletarian class.

The party's increased attention to *byt* and the domestic sphere was part of growing party anxiety over private life in general. Under NEP, café society was flourishing, "hooliganism" and abortion were increasing, and, in the Bolsheviks' view, moral corruption was spreading. The party believed that bourgeois elements were making a comeback, not only in the domestic realm but in all aspects of private life, driving home the fact that Soviet society was not moving closer to, but perhaps, even further away from socialism; in the social realm, as in the economic, NEP was not serving as a bridge to communism.

By 1925, there was a crisis within the party as many Bolshevik leaders feared the spread of capitalist contagion and the further embourgeoisement of society. NEP was resuscitating the ills of capitalism, and the Bolsheviks feared losing control to internal enemies, especially as the moral corruption manifested itself most of all among the youth, the hope for the future of the revolution.<sup>71</sup> In response the party launched a campaign to combat bourgeois influences and behavior; as it "began to increase its control over potentially 'apolitical' areas of social activity, 'personal life' was no longer accepted as an autonomous region."<sup>72</sup>

As a result of this growing concern with structuring private life, the party became increasingly anxious about the population's sexual conduct; heightened sexual activity and loose sexual mores, which were associated with bourgeois depravity, prostitution, and the spread of sexual and moral disease, were perceived as diminishing the productivity and revolutionary pre-

paredness of society. In an atmosphere of scrutiny of private activities and sexual behavior, the year 1925 saw increased attention to the issue of abortion. As implied by the *zhenotdely* press, most women labeled abortion a necessary evil, a view which the Women's Sections had been espousing since the legalization of this operation. But a significant number of articles in the *zhenotdely* press began to take a more negative view of abortion, underscoring the adverse impact of the operation on women's health. Some articles even began to censure women who sought abortions.<sup>73</sup>

The Department for the Protection of Motherhood and Infancy in Leningrad asserted that the motherly instinct was a component part of being a woman. Becoming a mother was natural and proper, and childbirth was a process which makes the women physically stronger and healthier; "only . . . motherhood gives a woman the full blossoming of [her] female strength and health, enhancing the female organism, preserving youth, strength, [and] health."<sup>74</sup> Criticizing those who had abortions not out of socio-economic necessity but out of selfishness (probably a poke at nepwomen and members of the bourgeois class), one woman worker wrote, "I blame the healthy woman who does not want to have children, but the woman who [already] has three to five children and has an abortion, one must pity her because she does not have another choice."<sup>75</sup> Another woman, decrying the loose morals of women who regularly seek abortions, wrote,

It is characteristic that the *majority* of women who apply for an abortion, who are trying to receive a free spot in the hospital, say that they are single. To the question where is your husband, they answer, he left me. But you see—within a few months these "single women" again show up for an abortion.<sup>76</sup>

Women who turned to abortion, especially those with few or no children, were now censured for loose morals and for leading a dissolute lifestyle.

The *zhenotdely* press also displayed greater criticism of people, usually men, who treated sexual and marital relations frivolously. A journal article, written at the end of 1926, complained of ". . . 'heroes' who have two or even three wives. And they claim that this means to live like a communist." Invoking

the authority of Lenin, who "heatedly criticized the dissoluteness in marriage relations which are taking shape under the guise of something supposedly new, revolutionary, and communistic," the author continued, "there is nothing here from communism, just the opposite—*there is a lot from the bourgeoisie.*"<sup>77</sup> Censoring casual sexual encounters, she called for stable, long-lasting familial relationships based on equality between husband and wife. Sexual and marital relations were no longer the concern of two people, but of the entire society and, above all, the party. Yet the call for stable family bonds, which accompanied the increased party presence in the sphere of marital relations, was welcomed by women who, whether due to their continued economic dependence on men (which may have been exacerbated by NEP), a genuine desire for secure relations, or both, expressed their wish for a stable family structure.<sup>78</sup>

In 1925-26 a new family code was drafted, but before it was ratified a nation-wide debate upon the proposed legislation enabled various sectors of society to voice their hopes and concerns regarding marital and familial relations.<sup>79</sup> In December 1925, the women's journal *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka* encouraged women to write in and share their thoughts on the proposals. For women, the critical point of the legislation, as reflected by the comments published in the journal, was the issue of marriage registration, of whether *de facto* unions would receive the same rights and privileges as *de jure* marriages.<sup>80</sup>

Despite the fact that recognition of *de facto* relationships was designed to protect women, the majority of women involved in the debate on the pages of *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka* expressed support for marriage registration. The most commonly held view was that the members of Soviet society (or, as the letters implied, Soviet men) were not "cultured" enough for unregistered marriages; while they agreed that *de facto* unions ought to be recognized, these women emphasized that people should be encouraged to register their marriages as the best means to protect women and children in case of divorce. Calling registration a "temporary measure," one woman worker wrote, "I find that the registration of marriages and divorce is needed for now both in the city and in the countryside. It is needed chiefly for women workers and women peasants because it makes it easier for them to obtain aid for the children from the father."<sup>81</sup> Another woman concurred, writing that "we are still not so conscious that we can

go without [registration]. . . . Registration is needed as a transitional step from the old *byt* to the new."<sup>82</sup> Reflecting an opinion typical of most of the women who took part in this debate, a *rabkorka* stated,

When two people on the basis of mutual feeling and trust enter into life together—that will be the contemporary understanding of marriage, and for that registration is not necessary. But such people are few, and the masses of people enter relationships completely by chance, and for them, registration is necessary. . . . I am sure that several years will pass and registration of marriages will begin to be unnecessary . . . but for now, we must instill in [our] consciousness a more serious approach to marriage, which will lead to a decline in divorces.<sup>83</sup>

There were also more extreme views. One woman, a village correspondent, asserted that registration ought to be mandatory; another wrote that "during the eighth year after the revolution [we] must grow out of the habit of formal registration. . . . I am personally of the opinion that church marriage and even registration in ZAGS are survivals from the old regime." Yet, even this last woman desired a serious approach to relationships and stable familial relations: "Nowadays we are free and have equal rights; thus we must build a mutual life in normal conditions and relate very attentively to family life."<sup>84</sup>

While the majority of these women felt that registration of marriage was necessary, at least for the meantime, each woman, worker and peasant alike, called for a better, sounder, solid family structure; women wanted a secure family on which they could rely for both emotional and material support. "The new *byt*," wrote one woman, reflecting the (revised) *zhenotdely* view that social activity was the fundamental requirement for women's liberation, "does not consist of having a relationship with one then another woman and for us—women—freedom is not to indulge in debauchery, but not to be slaves, to learn and to take our spot in the ranks of the socially active."<sup>85</sup> As these letters illustrate, women—or at least those whose letters were printed—wanted respect *within* the family. And while it is debatable whether the letters printed in the *zhenotdely* press were truly indicative of the

feelings of the majority of Russian women, the fact that they were published indicated party, or at least *zhenotdely*, support for both registration and stable family relations.

At the same time as the new family code was enacted, the *zhenotdely* press affirmed the family (and first and foremost the mother) as the primary caretaker of the child. An article published in the December 1926 edition of *Rabotnitsa* under the title "Our preschool institutions cannot serve all children," declared that the state will only provide "help to the family in raising the child."

The family in general must know how to raise the child. . . . For that reason, the pages of our journal will give instructions for the woman worker-mother on how to [and] under what circumstances and means to correctly feed the child, dress him, what to tell the child, why one doesn't punish, why the child plays.<sup>86</sup>

Not only did this article expressly place primary responsibility for the care of children within the family, it was also indicative of party intent to achieve control within the domestic sphere by instructing the mother how to care for the child, covering such issues as punishment, once considered up to the discretion of the individual parent. A month later another article reiterated this role of the family, stating that "all concern for the rearing [*vospitanie*] and health of the child is placed on the parents, and first of all the mother."<sup>87</sup>

While the *zhenotdely* had always discerned an important role for the family, and especially the mother, in child-rearing, this was the first time that the role of the family as the primary caretaker and educator of children was explicitly affirmed. Families were now encouraged to do things as a unit, to spend "family evenings" together at the local workers' clubs and to join in activities as a group rather than as individuals. Furthermore, as the family was now identified as the chief custodian of the younger generation, the *zhenotdely* called for a stable, calm, upright familial atmosphere; the Women's Sections insisted on a family where "there are not disagreements and fights. . . . The father does not get drunk, but works, and evenings goes out not to drink, but to a meeting, to the party school, to the club. The mother is busy with the housework [*khoziaistvo*] or [she] also works, studies,

[and] is busy with social work."<sup>88</sup> As this example illustrates, the ideal family was now portrayed as a fundamentally traditional entity, based on different roles for the parents. It was also a family which the women themselves asked for during the 1926 family law debate—or at least those women whose letters were published in the *zhenotdely* press, indicating that the *zhenotdely* now discerned a constructive capacity for the family and implicitly supported a traditional family structure.

While the first family code of 1918 tried to reduce what the Bolsheviks perceived as exploitative relationships, the new familial legislation affirmed a positive role for the family. The guarantees of child support and alimony confirmed parental (not state) responsibility to care for children and guaranteed support from the spouse, albeit limited, which, according to Clements, was "the first major step toward endorsing the nuclear family as a fundamental institution of Soviet society."<sup>89</sup> Women in *de facto* marriages were now to receive the same privileges and rights to support from the family as women in registered unions, which officially extended the scope of the family in caring for its members. Inheritance laws were also revised; the (unofficial) ten thousand ruble limit was lifted and a tax was imposed instead, thereby enhancing the economic functions of the family unit and enabling it to shoulder more responsibility for care of its members.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, the ban on adoption included in the 1918 familial legislation was reversed; while in fact adoption had been tacitly permitted since the beginning of NEP, as orphanages, suffering from cuts in state funding, could not support the vast number of homeless children, the 1926 law recognized adoption in principle, again identifying the family as the primary caretaker of children and the basic unit of Soviet society.

But even as the 1926 code discerned a constructive role for the family in Soviet society, the Bolsheviks were redefining the domestic realm as a sphere of party influence, instructing the individual members how to conduct themselves within the family unit. The family was no longer identified as a source of bourgeois contamination; rather, a stable home life was perceived as a counter to the moral impurities and ills of bourgeois depravity which were infecting society. No longer was the domestic sphere to be eradicated, turned into a public enterprise, but rather it was affirmed and sanctioned. For housewives, who were now instructed as to how to conduct their household chores and how to

behave within the family structure, this policy resulted, at least theoretically, in the reduction of private initiative and truly independent activity within the household; women were to maintain their traditional domestic roles of wife and mother, but were to do this under the guidance of the party. The implicit outcome of this policy would be the separation of the private and the domestic spheres and a family unit placed under party authority—a domestic sphere bereft of privacy.

In addition to affirming the positive role of the family, the 1926 family legislation also indicated a new perception of women's housework. Under the original Bolshevik familial legislation what one earned with his or her own wages while married remained that person's property in case of divorce; a wife did not "earn" a share of her husband's property by taking care of the home, implying that housework was not a valued service. The new legislation, enacted in 1927, amended this ruling so that property accumulated during marriage became the property of both partners, to be divided upon divorce. Designed to protect women who served their husbands and families during the years of matrimony, this change also tacitly acknowledged the value of housework.

If the wife is busy only with serving the family, caring for the children, etc., then, because her work is without a doubt helpful and necessary, she has the full right to her part [of the family belongings], even if during the time of married life she did not personally have any income.<sup>91</sup>

The 1926 legislation "placed women's labor in the house and care for the children on an equal footing with the labor of man in social production";<sup>92</sup> work done by women in the domestic sphere was now acknowledged as being of equal value as work conducted in the public sphere. In fact, women's domestic chores were, *de jure*, subsumed into the public sphere.

That same year, 1926, there appeared regular articles on "introducing the regime of economy in housework," in other words, advice on how to conduct housework efficiently.<sup>93</sup> Contemplating the role and tasks of the *zhenotdely* press, an article in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka* noted that in addition to discussing political and labor issues and giving counsel to mothers, "advice on housework, on correct nutrition, on cookery, on sewing and

needlework is not superfluous."<sup>94</sup> Since the housewife often wasted time because "she does not know how to correctly organize her housework," women were instructed on how to most productively structure their day.<sup>95</sup> Introduced in part to increase readership, such articles were also indicative of the drive to structure domestic life and create a stable family unit, and were part of the continuing effort to introduce efficiency and discipline and to expand party authority over all aspects of domestic life and private behavior, including housework.<sup>96</sup>

Hence, as women "retreated" to the domestic sphere, the party began to target its efforts there, attempting to reach women inside the home. And even though the Women's Sections continued to press for the creation of public institutions, they also published articles which encouraged women to clean the house and cook and sew for the family. In this manner, articles on cooking, cleaning, and the like illustrate how the women themselves influenced the message of the *zhenotdely*. For in order to accomplish their goal of reaching women through the printed word, the *zhenotdely* had to alter their message and make it more appealing to women—they had to attract subscribers, which they did by offering women advice on how to fulfill their chores. Thus, an advertisement for *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka* did not mention political columns or reviews of Soviet work, but rather sewing patterns and children's games: "Patterns, children's games, designs for needle work, and more. Subscribers of the journal '*Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*' will receive [these] free in 1929".<sup>97</sup> At this time, the *zhenotdely* press began to feature columns on housewives and their constructive participation in public activities, placing these women in a positive light.<sup>98</sup> As with the family, the housewife was no longer labeled a source of bourgeois contagion; rather, she was an important and productive member of Soviet society.

By 1927, there were hints that the readership of the *zhenotdely* press was changing, as more housewives began to read these women's journals. A homemaker, "Arkhipova from . . . 'Murmanskie Vorota' reports that the women workers and white-collar employees [*sluzhashchie*] . . . relate passively to subscriptions to the journal," while housewives eagerly subscribe. Another woman, a peasant, writes that all the adults in her family read *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*; even her "old father-in-law sometimes looks at it and mentions what a helpful journal it is." When she is done with it, she passes it on to her neighbors, who are

"especially interested in the sections 'Mother and children,' 'Agriculture,' and 'Housekeeping.' It would not be bad to increase these sections." Other women (including a group of peasant women delegates and a housewife) asked for more sewing patterns to be included in the magazine, the housewife noting that she "received a lot of helpful information from the doctors' column, the housekeeping section, and the patterns."<sup>99</sup> "This journal is . . . helpful to have in the house and to read, there is [always] some good advice for the house."<sup>100</sup> Women looked for (and received) advice from the *zhenotdely* press to help them with their domestic duties. If E. Bochkareva and S. Liubimova are correct in their assertion that the press "explain[ed] to the barely conscious [*malosoznatel'nie*] women workers their interests,"<sup>101</sup> then women were taught that their interests were intimately bound to their domestic duties and their role was to serve the family.

At the same time, a shift in the *zhenotdely's* constituency appears to have occurred. In the early 1920s working women dominated the delegate meetings in the Vasileostrovskii *raion* of Leningrad. Yet, by 1927, the number of housewives participating in these meetings (of which there had been a handful since 1922) greatly expanded so that their numbers were almost double that of white-collar employees. While there were still more female factory workers involved in the meetings than any other group, their proportional representation declined.<sup>102</sup> Additionally, the age ratio of this group of delegates was skewed towards a slightly older group; whereas in 1924 women under thirty comprised sixty to seventy-five per cent of the participants in delegate meetings, in 1927 women between thirty and forty years old comprised the majority of all delegates (seven hundred eighty-two out of fifteen hundred). Not only had the number of older women participating in the delegate meetings increased between 1924 and 1927, but their representation within these meetings was much larger than their ratio within the population of Leningrad, where women thirty to thirty-nine years of age comprised twenty-seven per cent of city's populace.<sup>103</sup> Although data on age alone cannot say conclusively, the increased proportion of older women might reflect the presence of more married women taking part in the delegate meetings and thus, a greater number who spent at least part of their day in the role of homemaker; unfortunately, information on this group's marital status is not available.

Whereas women delegates tended to be more literate than the female population of the Soviet Union, a slight decline in literacy rates among these delegates since 1923 appears to correspond to the increasing number of housewives involved in these groups.<sup>104</sup> Although more information is needed to make a definitive conclusion, it seems plausible that housewives were less literate than women workers; for women workers, literacy was, most likely, perceived as a means to obtain a better position, while, for the housewife, it was, overall, superfluous. If my hypothesis is correct—that the fairly high literacy, or at least semi-literacy, rate among delegates up to 1923 reflected the presence of women workers who were trying to compete in the job market, in other words, those women who would most likely support, at least to some degree, the *zhenotdely's* attempts to restructure the domestic sphere—the decline in literacy rates might have reflected not only an increase in the presence of housewives, but also have indicated a decrease in the proportion of women workers, especially skilled, who were taking part in the delegate meetings. Notably, of three hundred seventy-three women who withdrew from the delegate meetings during 1927, over seventy-five per cent were workers.<sup>105</sup>

Although my conclusions are preliminary, it appears that the revised message of the *zhenotdely* as well as the positive affirmation of the domestic sphere and women's role in it brought an increasing number of housewives into the delegate meetings. At the same time, the *zhenotdely* were losing representation (at least proportionally) among female factory workers and the white-collar work force. Significantly, the housewife, "Arkhipova from . . . 'Murmanskie Vorota,'" stressed that women workers, whom she believed to be the *zhenotdely's* natural constituency, were uninterested in subscribing to the women's press.<sup>106</sup> The *zhenotdely* increased their presence in the domestic sphere amongst housewives at the cost of losing adherents among working women, especially among the more highly skilled. Yet, the degree to which the *zhenotdely* truly made inroads into the domestic sphere is questionable, for housewives heeded the message of the *zhenotdely* only selectively.

At the Second All-Russian Women's Congress in 1927—the first nation-wide female Congress since 1918—the *zhenotdely* leaders continued to tout the importance of public institutions for women's liberation.<sup>107</sup> Yet, unlike the first Congress, where the

founders of the Women's Sections, party figures such as Kollontai, Armand, and Samoilova, called for the complete emancipation of women via the transfer of all domestic duties to the state, the 1927 Congress focused upon the establishment of services which would enable women to mix domestic duties with work or other activities outside the home, concentrating upon the creation of day care centers and nurseries. Comparing the 1927 Congress with the First Women's Congress, A. S. Enukidze stated that "on the agenda of the first Congress of women workers . . . were issues of family, of social protection, of the role of women workers in the economy, of female and child labor, of the protection of motherhood and infancy. . . . [But] now we know what hinders women from attaining in fact equal rights with men," thereby implying that a woman's familial position did not prevent her from attaining equality.<sup>108</sup> Women no longer needed to be "emancipated from the family"; they were now striving for equality and equal rights (and were subject to the "equal right" to be mobilized) in a public sphere which recognized a positive role for the family and the domestic realm, once though to be the kernel of bourgeois influence. Significantly, the number of factory and district day nurseries, services which cared for children part of the day, decreased in 1922-23 from nine hundred fourteen to four hundred forty-seven such institutions in the RSFSR, but climbed again by 1927 to six hundred thirty-one, while the number of children's homes, state establishments for the constant care of children, steadily declined from seven hundred sixty-five in 1922 to two hundred forty-five at the beginning of 1927.<sup>109</sup>

Besides child day care facilities, the *zhenotdely* continued to stress the importance of public cafeterias. Nonetheless, women proved reluctant to take advantage of these kitchens, resisting the *zhenotdely's* appeals to use communal dining facilities. By their actions, i.e., by avoiding these facilities, women asserted their desire to retain, however emasculated, the private domestic realm, a wish which was repeated in their frequent requests for more sewing patterns, extra articles on housekeeping, and additional recipes to be included in the women's press.

While further evidence on women's desires is necessary to ascertain how women perceived the *zhenotdely's* calls for liberation, such testimony is difficult to gather. Most women did not record their aspirations, while letters and other contributions to the women's press could be repressed or censored to serve *zhenot-*

dely and party goals. Publications from Russian women were rare, and the few books produced by Russian women outside the Soviet Union (usually members of the former upper classes or intelligentsia who left Russia during the 1920s) are stridently anti-Soviet.<sup>110</sup> The thoughts, motivations, and aspirations of common workers, peasants, and housewives, women who were not part of the party, are not recorded. Nevertheless, women were able to express their desires silently, via their actions, in other words, by following or ignoring the directives of the *zhenotdely*. In the later 1920s the women's press continued to lament women's indifference to the use of communal institutions, illustrating that women preferred to retain their domestic duties and their position within the familial realm, rather than transfer such obligations to the state. As late as 1926, almost ten years after the revolution, *Rabotnitsa* complained that, while women are concerned with "nurseries and other children's institutions," they pay little attention to public dining.<sup>111</sup> And in 1928 the journal *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, lamenting women's indifference to the creation and use of communal eateries, launched a "mini-campaign" to discern why women were reluctant to take advantage of such facilities.<sup>112</sup>

Why did the Women's Sections remain so committed to the establishment of public cafeterias in the later 1920s even as they implicitly "agreed" to let women remain in the home? Reportedly, cafeterias were more economical and efficient than cooking in the private kitchen and would enable women to have more free time to become involved in public activities. Yet, perhaps another reason why the *zhenotdely* desired to eradicate the individual kitchen was more symbolic than the supposed economic and health-related advantages of communal eateries or the liberation such places would provide women. Richard Stites points out that "the individual kitchen is the strongest symbol of the nuclear family (as it once was its main meeting place)."<sup>113</sup> By moving the place of eating to a communal hall, the Soviet regime was symbolically destroying the bonds of the nuclear family, removing fidelity to this individual unit and replacing it with overarching loyalty to the "collective family" of all Soviet citizens. For while the family was now seen as an important component of society, overarching loyalty was still, first and foremost, to be to "the collective," in other words, the regime.

Yet, despite appeals to the practical advantages of public dining over the individual kitchen, women preferred to remain in

their own kitchens. Jessica Smith, an American relief worker in Russia in the 1920s, relates that when Russians moved into a housing facility established by the Russian-American Farms, they did not use the communal kitchen, but rather set up individual stoves in their rooms. If they did use the central kitchen, each woman used it separately. There was, Smith notes, an "intense reluctance [on the part] of most Russian women to give up their own kitchen stove."<sup>14</sup>

If these dining facilities were so crucial to women's liberation, why did they prove so unpopular with women? Part of the answer lies in the condition of these places; they were dirty, dingy, and often smelly locations, with (contrary to the assertions that communal kitchens could provide more nutritious meals) poor food. "Glance at a bowl of soup, there is only water with herbs." One cafeteria in Leningrad had so many cockroaches that they "eat us and we eat them even more. There are especially a lot [of roaches] in the kitchen, and because of that you often see them in the food." Such eating establishments frequently were not heated during the winter months so that patrons had to eat with their coats still on. Furthermore, the prices were too high, and one woman noted that there was not proper food for infants. Even well-kept, clean kitchens were criticized for slow service. "Ah, the lines! They stretch out of the cafeteria, because of them you lose time, because of them you lose your appetite."<sup>15</sup>

Certainly, the dingy atmosphere of the majority of public cafeterias did not encourage families to choose such establishments over the family kitchen, but the poor conditions of these places alone does not explain why women continued to use their own kitchens. Even in communal housing facilities with central kitchens designed for the preparation of group meals, families often constructed kitchens in their own quarters. One factor was that communal feeding, like so much else in early Soviet life, placed "the collective" above the individual, for communal feeding does not cater to individual taste. The rejection of public kitchens was perhaps, also, another way women affirmed their desire to maintain the family unit. But there might also be an additional explanation why women were reluctant to give up their kitchen: that is, for women the kitchen was not a "symbol of slavery" but rather a place where they had power, where they did not have to compete with men. The kitchen (more so than caring for the children, in which the husband, and even the state, had a

role) was the realm of women, a place where they were in charge. Retaining the individual kitchen was an act of resistance on the part of women against the encroachment of the state, and women were not about to give it up.

Furthermore, it was not just the kitchen where women had power; they enjoyed considerable authority within the private familial sphere, that realm which the *zhenotdely* wanted to reduce, to transform into a "socialist enterprise" and a sphere of party influence. One peasant woman (reflecting the views of many women) vehemently rejected the *zhenotdely's* definition of liberation. "Some women delegates came to us," she said, "and explained that now we weren't slaves any more but free women and told us how we should treat our husbands, but we aren't such fools as all that! *We were never slaves in our own homes* so long as the law was for us. . . . Well, those delegates didn't hit it off with us. We made a proper row and turned them out in disgrace. We didn't spare words."<sup>116</sup> For the majority of women, the "liberation" offered by the *zhenotdely* was not freedom, but political mobilization which created additional burdens in a realm where women had little authority.

Although admonished since the beginning of NEP by the *zhenotdely* to improve their job qualifications and become skilled professionals, women, for the most part, refused to do so. Perceived by the *zhenotdely* as the best means for women to compete on the labor market, the improvement of women's qualifications was also another way of raising women to the level of men, to the level of the ideal worker, "the 'real' (i.e. experienced, predominantly male, and skilled)" proletarian who was associated "with heavy—and, in particular, the metalworks—industry."<sup>117</sup> The few women, typically younger, who did attend the *fabzavuch* (the factory workshop-school), where they were discriminated against by their instructor and other (male) students, usually did not complete the course. By ignoring the urgings of the *zhenotdely* to improve job qualifications and to work as skilled laborers, women were resisting the call to work and compete with men in the public realm.

Both Clements and Beatrice Farnsworth found that among peasant women, those who took part in *zhenotdely* activities were usually Red Army wives or widows who were trying to maintain a family farm without the aid of a husband.<sup>118</sup> In other words, in the countryside, the *zhenotdely* attracted women who were trying

to compete in the male-dominated world of the Russian peasantry.<sup>119</sup> An article from *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka* corroborates these findings, stating that "a married peasant woman is less interested in social life and work."<sup>120</sup> Clements concludes that married peasant women were least attracted to the *zhenotdely* because they realized the "value" of a husband. On the other hand, single peasant women were usually poorer than other peasants; they frequently proved unable to keep their land plots and were forced to become rural wage laborers or move to the city.<sup>121</sup> Yet, perhaps there is another reason why married peasant women stayed away from the *zhenotdely*: that is, these women, least of all, wanted to alter the division between the public and the domestic spheres, which was a component part of the Women's Sections' message of liberation. Within the world of the peasantry the domestic sphere is where married women traditionally had authority. While the wife may have been under the authority of the husband, she had her own spheres of influence within the family and the community. Married women "wielded considerable power because of [their] indispensable role in maintaining the household as a social and economic unit . . . . Control over the domestic hearth, the ability to affect social relationships, the functions of matchmaker, mother, mother-in-law, midwife, and herbalist provided women with power bases extending beyond the household."<sup>122</sup> The married peasant woman may have resented and shunned communal services because such services removed authority from her hands.

Commenting upon gender and family relations in the peasant household during the 1920s, Lewis Siegelbaum notes that

both earlier and later researchers tended to assume that the household was a patriarchal unit rather than one in which male and female members led separate lives and were involved in different kinds of production relations . . . the observation that 'male and female worlds do not always harmonize, and frequently . . . do not even touch' has yet to be fully utilized in examining the Russian peasant household in the 1920s or for that matter, succeeding decades.<sup>123</sup>

As Siegelbaum observes, men did not necessarily dominate women within a patriarchal family structure; rather, men and

women lived in separate, yet interwoven and symbiotic worlds, where each had their own realms of power and authority. And even as women entered the public sphere, they were not about to relinquish their authority in the domestic sphere. Perhaps housework did add an extra burden on women, as they now were summoned to participate in public activities outside the home in addition to their domestic duties; yet, in the Soviet context, where their only choice was between maintaining a "double burden" or leading a single life, women chose to maintain such a burden. Women, at least in their own view, were not slaves, but rather rulers within their home; the home was *their* realm of power. Hence, this study has, in addition to examining the Bolsheviks' changing relationship to the public and domestic spheres, also indicated the need to reexamine and reconsider the familial structure and women's position within it, taking into account the role and the perception of the women themselves.

### **The Liquidation of the *zhenotdely***

On 17 January 1930 *Pravda* announced that the *zhenotdely* had been abolished and that direct agitational and organizational work among women was placed under the aegis of the Agitprop Department. Because work among women had been so successful, the paper stated, because women were more involved in party-state activities than ever before, a special department for women was no longer needed.<sup>124</sup> Instead, as the title of an article written by Aleksandra Artiukhina, the last director of the Central *Zhenotdel* (1927-1930), stated, "work among women ought to be led by the entire party apparatus, the soviets, [and] the trade unions." Arguing that with the liquidation of the *zhenotdely* "work among women is lifted to a new, higher level," Artiukhina asserted that "the reorganization of the *zhenotdely* provides the possibility to develop, to a wider degree, mass work among women and to attract millions of new women workers and peasants to Soviet construction."<sup>125</sup> Work among women, she wrote, was to be expanded and to become the concern of all party organizations. Yet, the liquidation of the *zhenotdely* had deeper roots than the "fact" that they had been so successful in bringing women into the soviets and the party. Although sources are scarce, it appears that industrialization and especially collectivization, in other words, the abandonment of NEP's gradualist

policies, brought about the demise of the Women's Sections.

At the Sixteenth Party Congress in June 1930, L. M. Kaganovich, reported on the situation in the countryside, noting that peasant women were providing much of the resistance to collectivization.<sup>126</sup> Their "political backwardness," he said, made them susceptible to the influence of the kulaks, which Artiukhina also noted.<sup>127</sup> While this situation underscored the need for continued political education among peasant women (and, in fact, delegate meetings continued in rural areas until 1934),<sup>128</sup> "Kaganovich asserted that this problem had arisen in the first place because party organizers among women had been concentrating too much on the problems of women's everyday lives, and not enough on political education among women."<sup>129</sup> The party leadership concluded that the *zhenotdely* were unable to mobilize women for the tasks at hand.

The furious pace of industrialization and collectivization . . . posed tasks of mass mobilization which were, in the minds of some, much too imposing to be handled by Zhenotdel. One party figure, according to Kaganovich, felt that "Zhenotdel was no longer a center of progress, but rather a brake on it."<sup>130</sup>

Hayden concludes that "the party leadership felt that it was no longer useful or necessary to approach women on the basis of their everyday needs and problems," in other words, to concentrate on women's domestic position.<sup>131</sup>

The Cultural Revolution (1928-1931) may also have had a role in the demise of the *zhenotdely*, as the complaints about the Women's Sections concentrating too much on women's domestic position suggest. The Cultural Revolution unleashed an attack on "right deviations" and organizations which promoted "evolutionary" methods of attaining communism. At this time, L. M. Sabsovich, a high official of Gosplan, suggested the creation of communal dwellings where each person would have his own room (though the rooms of married couples could be connected) and children would stay in "special children's towns to be built at a distance from the family." Stating that the "child was the property of the state, not the individual family," he called for the complete separation of children from parents.<sup>132</sup> And speaking in a manner reminiscent of early *zhenotdely* leaders such as Armand

and Kollontai, he recommended the abolition of the individual household:

In Sabsovich's vision, communal life replaces the wasteful and deadening private household, a "scourge that deforms the lives of adults and children alike." The aims of communalism? To free all workers (especially women) from responsibility for the provision of daily needs and from the private obligation of childrearing and education, to make woman equal to man by opening the doors of her domestic jail, to release energies for the fulfillment of individual needs and collective life, to enhance the health of children, to raise the cultural level of all people, and to end the distinction between hand and brain labor. The means? The "industrialization" of all tasks previously performed, separately and wastefully, inside the "petit bourgeois" home.<sup>133</sup>

During the course of the 1920s, the *zhenotdely* had moved far away from such visions, attempting to structure the domestic sphere by instructing women in cooking, child-rearing, and sewing. Therefore, even as high-level party leaders censured the *zhenotdely* for proving unable to mobilize women to fulfill the tasks of industrialization and collectivization, the Women's Sections were probably also attacked by Cultural Revolutionary enthusiast for being decidedly unrevolutionary.

The transformation of the *zhenotdely* from a group espousing the eradication of the familial realm as key to women's liberation to a body instructing women how to perform their chores within the domestic sphere raises the question of the nature of the *zhenotdely* in its later years—were the Women's Sections more *instructive* in the early 1920s and later more *responsive* in their approach to women, reacting to women's desires to maintain a domestic realm? I would say not. To understand the nature of the Women's Sections, one has to understand the multidirectional nature of power, for as women responded to (or ignored) the liberating message of the *zhenotdely*, the Women's Sections were compelled to react and to alter their approach to women. The *zhenotdely* revised their tactics to combat the recrudescence of pre-revolutionary social behaviors and to retain influence over the

many women who returned to the home, a policy designed not to appease women or to satisfy their desires, but rather to instruct and induce women to be productive citizens and partisans of the new regime. Yet, even as the *zhenotdely* altered their *approaches* to women, reaching women by offering them advice designed to transform the domestic realm and coax them into the party's sphere of influence rather than eradicating the familial domain and forcing change, their *goal* remained the same. Prior to NEP, the *zhenotdely* reached women at the place of work, using the delegate meetings as a forum to teach women to be active, productive members of the new regime, for which, the early leaders claimed, the private, domestic sphere must be reduced. With the commencement of NEP, the *zhenotdely* began to also reach out to women within the domestic sphere, theoretically transforming it into a realm of party authority by using the power of discourse, persuasion, and instruction to alter women's behaviors and *draw them into the socialist sector*—much the same way the party attempted to use cooperatives to draw the peasantry into the socialist sector. In this sense the *zhenotdely* remained instructive, albeit where and what they were instructing women changed. The fundamental shift over course of 1920s was not in the *zhenotdely's* basic aim of making women constructive members of the new regime, but the (attempted) redefinition of the domestic sphere as a realm of privacy to a sphere of the party. Yet, women's ability to selectively heed the advice of the *zhenotdely* illustrates that the domestic sphere continued to be a place of individual initiative and private activity. It was the failure of the party to truly reconstruct the domestic sphere, proven, in the eyes of party members, by women's resistance to collectivization, that illustrated the "failure" of the *zhenotdely's* evolutionary approach.

In this manner, the liquidation of the *zhenotdely* reflected the party's abandonment of NEP and gradualist or evolutionary approaches to communism. By the end of the 1920s, as society appeared no closer to, and perhaps ever farther from, communism, the party forsook the use of discourse and persuasion in favor of a more aggressive policy designed to propel society to communism. The methods used by the *zhenotdely* during NEP to draw women into the party's sphere of influence and to increase party presence within the domestic sphere, came to be perceived by the end of the 1920s as a hindrance to the party's goal of rapid economic and cultural transformation.

## Conclusion

Elizabeth Wood contends that economic factors were the main reason why the Bolsheviks ceased to speak of the "withering away of the family" and women's "emancipation from slavery"—the regime simply did not have the resources to transform the domestic sphere.

By the end of the [civil] war, the dominant ideology of the Party concerning women and the family, particularly concerning state responsibility for transforming relations within the family, had begun to change as state administrators came up against the limitations of their own position. Ideology followed economics in these years. Without the necessary resources to restructure the economy and commit funds towards issues of gender and the family, policy-makers now began to retreat. . . . In meetings of the women's sections, for example, it was no longer assumed that the state would be able to take over household functions and that the family would wither away.<sup>134</sup>

The economic austerity enacted under NEP certainly did have a significant effect on the work of the *zhenotdely*. The reduction of government spending on communal institutions required the *zhenotdely* to look to other, local sources of funding. High unemployment among women compelled the *zhenotdely* to shift their definition of liberation from one based on an independent wage to a wider definition based on social production and activity in general. Lastly, as more women were unemployed, the *zhenotdely* placed greater focus on the need to consciously transform the domestic sphere. Yet, economics alone cannot explain the changing attitude towards and conceptions of the domestic sphere during the 1920s. And neither can "high politics" and party struggles, though they played important roles as well.

With the commencement of NEP, the party's concern with *byt*, which had, even before this time, been considerable, increased; and over the course of NEP the nature of this concern expanded. As capitalist forces were allowed to thrive in the economic realm, the party extended its authority over the private

sphere, attempting to combat bourgeois influences by structuring the workers' leisure time and even their family life. For women, the result was increased attention to the reconstruction of the domestic sphere, the transformation of familial relations, and the creation of communal or state-run institutions designed to liberate them. Significantly, this "liberation" of women was to occur within the *zhenotdely's* definition of that term, ultimately "liberating" women by assuming greater control over their lives and promoting a new discourse of power over women in the guise of freedom.

Yet, in order to influence the domestic realm, the *zhenotdely* had to ultimately acknowledge it. This affirmation of the domestic sphere occurred for two interconnected reasons beyond mere economics, though economics, as well as politics, did play a role. First was the need for the *zhenotdely* to remain viable entities under the conditions of NEP, to retain their titular position as the leaders of the female proletariat; hence, their definition of liberation shifted as the *zhenotdely* widened their organizational, educational, and publishing activities to reach not only working women, but the unemployed, wives of workers, and other lower class women.

Secondly, but more importantly, was the role of the women themselves in influencing the work of the Women's Sections. In order to enter the private familial sphere and draw women into the public realm, the *zhenotdely* approached women via "women's interests," concerns which revolved about women's domestic duties. To encourage women to go to workers' clubs, the *zhenotdely* offered sewing circles; to increase readership, the *zhenotdely* press featured sewing patterns, recipes, and housekeeping advice. The Women's Sections did not cease to call for the transformation of the domestic relations, but they also began to dispense advice on housekeeping which ultimately kept women in their traditional family roles.

The *zhenotdely's* overriding goal was to bring women into the party's sphere of authority and to create a productive female population. In their search for ways to influence women, to make them part of official culture, the *zhenotdely* had to negotiate with women. Via the delegate meetings and, to a much wider degree, via the press, the *zhenotdely* attempted to inculcate Bolshevik values of time, efficiency, and productivity among Soviet women. But in turn, women "dictated" where and how the *zhenotdely* were

going to do this. For in "retreating" to the home and remaining, to a large degree, apart from public life, women compelled the *zhenotdely* to accept women's domestic roles. As a result, rather than lifting women to the level of men and making them into productive workers in the public sphere, the *zhenotdely* "agreed" to let women be productive workers within a domestic sphere that was *de jure* if not *de facto* increasingly subsumed under the state. Thus, the *zhenotdely* press began to feature articles designed to aid women in their domestic duties and help them conduct such work more efficiently.

By 1926, housework was implicitly recognized as a valued service to the family, and the family itself was affirmed as a basic unit of Soviet society and a bulwark against moral corruption. Ultimately, the domestic sphere and women's role in it were positively acknowledged, but it was a sphere which was to be subject to Bolshevik notions of time and efficiency and to increasing party authority in the guise of guidance and advice to the wife and mother. Theoretically, it was a domestic sphere subordinate to the power of the party, which made it "a sphere of pseudo-privacy"<sup>135</sup>—a domestic sphere bereft of privacy.

Despite the *zhenotdely's* altered approach to women's liberation, they proved unpopular with most women. Even though they acknowledged the domestic sphere, they still aimed to transform and reduce it; in doing this, the *zhenotdely* were chipping away at women's privileges and position within the family, which threatened to diminish women's realm of authority. Women did not want to be "liberated," at least not on the *zhenotdely's* terms. Desirous of a stable family structure and blaming philandering men for abandoning their wives, the majority of women expressed the view that too much freedom was harming women, especially at a time when the country did not have enough "culture." Women wanted respect and recognition within the traditional family structure. Moreover, most women did not perceive themselves as "slaves" of the family; women wanted, overwhelmingly, to remain in their kitchen, and they stubbornly held on to their authority within the domestic sphere. Although the *zhenotdely* asserted that once involved in useful social activities (as defined by the regime), women would then become more and more active in the public sphere, at the end of the 1920s the *zhenotdely* were still espousing the need to organize women about "women's needs," illustrating that most women

had not gone on to "bigger and better" Soviet and party work. Instead, women remained in traditional "women's roles" and outside positions of political and economic power—where, perhaps, they wanted to remain.

The history of the *zhenotdely* provides a deeper understanding of NEP as well as the designs and limitations of the party. For NEP was not a time of "retreat," at least not in the social realm, and "the identification of [NEP] with retreat limits one's appreciation of a whole range of experiences."<sup>136</sup> NEP was rather a period when the party was redefining its relationship with the society and its conception of the public, private, and domestic spheres, aggrandizing its authority while diminishing the realm of autonomous activity. Unfortunately, few works have examined the number of voluntary associations which arose in the 1920s, groups by which the party attempted to penetrate isolated areas of social or private life and extend its cultural hegemony by socializing the populace in its values of "industry," "productivity," and "modernity." The *zhenotdely* were part of this effort to reduce, or at least reconfigure, the private sphere, for in both their original goal of eliminating the domestic sphere and in their revised goal of establishing a domestic sphere under the tutelage of the party-state apparatus, they endeavored to create a familial realm in which private life and private initiative did not play a role and loyalty was, first and foremost, to the state. Such a policy on family life reached its logical culmination in the figure of Pavel Morozov, the boy, lauded by the party, who denounced his father for harboring kulaks.

But the party was not omnipotent; it had to contend with pre-revolutionary "cultural residues" and the reemergence of pre-revolutionary social patterns, and it was often thwarted in its designs by the population. As the party attempted to structure the lives of its citizens, to create a productive populace, and to inculcate its values, people were able to subvert party plans simply by "retreating" or ignoring them, by conducting their lives along traditional patterns, and sometimes by infiltrating organizations and using them to their own benefit. Society was able, in a sense, to influence the party, compelling the Bolsheviks to reevaluate their tactics. Thus, the *zhenotdely* did, to a degree, become "tentacles in the hands of the party, with whose help [it was] . . . able to transmit its will to the working class,"<sup>137</sup> but only by altering their approach to women and by shedding their original goal

of "emancipating women from the family." Ultimately, the Women's Sections were unable to attract women without reshaping their message, illustrating the influence of women over the *zhenotdely* and thus, another aspect of the *kto-kogo* issue which troubled the party during the era of NEP.

Could NEP have been a "road to socialism"? Could the party have "taught" the people socialist values? If the goal of the party was to create a "New Soviet Society" with a "Soviet citizenry," a state which fit *its* image of communist "Utopia," then the populace's ability to circumvent party attempts to create that perfect society suggests not. As Eric Naiman points out, "utopias are infected . . . by historical transition"; they cannot arise out of an "imperfect" society.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, this older, imperfect society was "infecting" the vanguard of the new society, the party. Even Bukharin, who believed that NEP could be a bridge to socialism, was deeply troubled by "the decay of Communist standards of morality" during the 1920s, a concern which compelled him to condemn the moral degeneration of NEP and even his own supporters.<sup>139</sup> This is not to suggest that either the demise of NEP or the "Stalin Revolution" was inevitable, but for those who perceived NEP as "Utopia Postponed," the belief that a communist society could be attained via NEP must have appeared an impossible prospect;<sup>140</sup> the gulf between "public values" promoted by the regime and the "private values" of society was great. Pre-revolutionary social patterns and pre-revolutionary behaviors resurfaced under NEP, which the party seemed helpless to combat; the party was witness not to a transition to socialism, but the revival of what was perceived to be "bourgeois corruption." The "social" or "cultural dilemma of NEP" was that the party proved unable to create the perfect society, *its* perfect society.

Certainly, for many in the party, the fact that women were still "tied to the family hearth" was not "Utopia Postponed." But the history of the *zhenotdely* illustrates how society was able to thwart the party's attempts to redefine the relationship between the public and private spheres and its endeavors to restructure the personal lives of the population. In its efforts to configure a new, truly Soviet population, the party had to contend with pre-revolutionary behaviors and attitudes and confront the social realities of NEP Russia, which in turn forced the party to alter its tactics. Society was not to be simply molded by the party's designs; thus, the Bolsheviks looked to party subgroups and

"voluntary" organizations to shape what it perceived as a backwards, unproductive populace, to inculcate its values into society. In this sense, the NEP era can be seen as a time of implicit negotiation between the party and society and of hidden strife. Neither the analysis of the 1920s given by the "creeping totalitarian" theorists nor that of the "NEP as golden era" revisionists captures the true essence of this era. During NEP the party endeavored to create the "perfect communist society" via discourse and persuasion, but as Michel Foucault's analysis of power reminds us, power is multidirectional. The 1920s was a period in which both the party and society were searching for a *modus vivendi* and above all, a *novyi byt*.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Aleksandra Kollontai, "The Family and the Communist State (1918)," in William G. Rosenberg, ed., *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia* (Ann Arbor: Ardis Publishers, 1984), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 87.

<sup>3</sup> Lenin, as quoted in V. I. Starodub, *Zhenshchina i obshchestvennyi trud* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1975), p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> D. Kamen'kovich, "Ob organizatsii uchastiia trudiashchikhsia zhenshchin v rabote podotdelov okhrany materinstva i mladenchestva," in *Kommunistka*, No. 7 (December 1920), p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> Engels, in Norman W. Bell and Ezra F. Vogel, *A Modern Introduction to the Family* (New York: The Free Press, London: Collier-MacMillan Ltd., 1968), p. 46. For a further discussion of the influence of Marx and Engels on the Bolsheviks' theory on women, refer to Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Elizabeth A. Wood, *Gender and Politics in Soviet Russia: Working Women Under the New Economic Policy, 1918-1928* (Ph.D. diss. University of Michigan, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> For a history of the relationship between the party and the Central Women's Section, refer to Carol Eubanks Hayden, *Feminism and Bolshevism: the Zhenotdel and the Politics of Women's Emancipation in Russia, 1917-1930*, Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1979 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1979). Hayden's accounts describes how the power struggles within the Soviet leadership affected the *Zhenotdel* and limited its ability to promote women's liberation.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Hayden, *Feminism and Bolshevism*; Carol Eubanks Hayden, "The Zhenotdel and the Bolshevik Party," in *Russian History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1976), pp. 150-173; and Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). Richard Stites offers a more positive view of the accomplishments of the *zhenotdely* than the aforementioned authors, but as his main goal in studying the Women's Sections is to show areas of social innovation in the Russian Revolution which were crushed by Stalin, his analysis is also based upon increasing party control of the *zhenotdely*. See Richard Stites, "Zhenotdel: Bolshevism and Russian Women, 1917-1930," in *Russian History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1976), pp. 174-193.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Petr Mateevich Chirkov, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa v SSSR (1917-1937 gg.)* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo "Mysl'," 1978); V. L. Bil'shai, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa v SSSR* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1956); V. L. Bil'shai, *Sovetskaia demokratiia i ravnopravie zhenshchin v SSSR* (Moskva: Iuridicheskoe izdatel'stvo Ministerstva iustitsii SSSR, 1948); and G. N. Serebrennikov, *The Position of Women in the USSR* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970).

<sup>9</sup> Glennys Young, "Trading Icons: Clergy, Laity, and Rural Cooperatives, 1921-1928," in *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, Vol. 26, Nos. 1-4 (1992), p. 332.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the pre-history of the *zhenotdely*, refer to M. Donald, "Bolshevik Activity Amongst the Working Women of Petrograd in 1917," in *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1982), pp. 129-160. For a discussion of Kollontai's activities among women prior to 1917, refer to Aleksandra Kollontai, *Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971) and Kollontai, "Avtobiograficheskii ocherk," in *Proletarskaia Revoliutsia: Istoricheskii zhurnal Istparta*, No. 3 (1921), pp. 261-302. For a discussion of the history of the Central Zhenotdel, refer to Hayden, *Feminism and Bolshevism*; Hayden, "The Zhenotdel and the Bolshevik Party;" and Stites, "Zhenotdel."

<sup>11</sup> At this time, the party reached out to other sub-groups within the working class; in fall of 1918, not only was the first women's conference held, but the Jewish Section and the Komsomol were established.

For a further discussion of deurbanization during the Civil War, refer to Diane Koenker, "Urbanization and Deurbanization in the Russian Revolution and the Civil War," in Diane P. Koenker, William G. Rosenberg, and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Party, State, and Society in the Russian Civil War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 81-104. Interestingly, even as the cities became depopulated during these turbulent years, the number of women who left was minimal (Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society Between Revolutions, 1918-1929* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], p. 30).

<sup>12</sup> I. Armand, "Zadachi rabotnits v Sovetskoï Rossii (1919)," in *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1975), pp. 67-68.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Evans Clements, "The Birth of the New Soviet Woman," in Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites, eds., *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 224-225.

<sup>14</sup> P. Vinogradskaia, "Odna iz ocherednykh zadach," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 3-4 (August-September 1920), p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> Hayden argues that there was a fundamental difference between founders of the *zhenotdely*. While women, such as Kollontai and Vera Golubeva (the deputy director of the Women's Sections), focused upon the need to liberate women and to bring their influence to bear upon the party, others, such as Samoïlova, stressed the necessity of bringing women into the party and making them the subjects of party rule. These differing emphases on women's emancipation notwithstanding, both Samoïlova and Kollontai perceived women's "liberation from the family" and inclusion in the party as important steps in the socialist transformation of society, not as goals in themselves. Hence, both of them ultimately viewed women as political objects of the party. Refer to Hayden, *Feminism and Bolshevism* and Hayden, "The Zhenotdel and the Bolshevik Party."

<sup>16</sup> Jürgen Habermas, trans. by Thomas Burger, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 154-155. According to Habermas, with the rise of the welfare state, the state began to assume extensive care for the individual in the form of various social services and insurance once left to the family. This new role of the state

transferred protective functions to the public realm and ultimately increased state control over the individual. Under these conditions Habermas concludes that "this [familial or private] domain, abandoned under the direct onslaught of extrafamilial authorities upon the individual, . . . started to dissolve into a sphere of pseudo-privacy." As the state shouldered more care for the individual, the public sphere became involved in what was once considered private, increasing its presence within and leverage over the domestic realm and hence, transforming it, (Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, pp. 151-159).

<sup>17</sup> Kollontai, *Autobiography*, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup> Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 150.

<sup>19</sup> Barbara Evans Clements, "The Utopianism of the Zhenotdel," in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Fall 1992), pp. 485-496.

<sup>20</sup> Lenin, as quoted in V. I. Starodub, *Zhenshchina i obshchestvennyi trud*, p. 80, emphasis added.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974).

<sup>22</sup> Kollontai, as quoted in Alix Holt, ed. and trans., *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai* (Westport Conn: L. Hill, 1977), pp. 119-120.

<sup>23</sup> For more information on the *besprizorniki*, refer to Alan M. Ball, *And Now My Soul is Hardened: Abandoned Children in Soviet Russia, 1918-1930* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1994); Alan Ball, "The Roots of *Besprizornost'* in Soviet Russia's First Decade," in *Slavic Review* Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 1992), pp. 247-270; and Jennie A. Stevens, "Children of the Revolution: Soviet Russia's Homeless in the 1920s," in *Russian History* Vol. 9, Nos. 2-3 (1982), pp. 246-264.

<sup>24</sup> "Decree on the Legalization of Abortions of November 18, 1920," as quoted in Rudolph Schlesinger, *Changing Attitudes in Soviet Russia: The Family in the U.S.S.R.*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1949), p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Istoriko-Politicheskoi Dokumentatsii (TsGAIPD)*, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12909; ll. 2, 25-26, emphasis added.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Sheila Fitzpatrick, speaking of the "strategic retreat of NEP" in the economic realm, states that "from the Communist standpoint

NEP was a retreat, and a partial admission of failure," (Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932* [Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982], p. 88). Lenin himself referred to NEP as a strategic retreat.

<sup>27</sup> Barbara Evans Clements, "The Effects of the Civil War on Women and Family Relations," in Koenker, Rosenberg, Suny, *Party, State, and Society*, p. 109.

<sup>28</sup> Wood, *Gender and Politics*, pp. 199, 205.

<sup>29</sup> V. Moirova, "Perspektiva nashei raboty," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 8-9 (Aug.-Sept., 1922), pp. 3-4. Unfortunately, the author does not give an idea of how many women withdrew from the *zhenotdely*, nor is she clear whether these women left only the *zhenotdely* or the party altogether.

<sup>30</sup> The Women's Sections conducted most of their direct organizing work via the delegate meetings. Women were elected to participate in delegate meetings by a gathering of their peers (usually women at a specific factory or group of factories, but also gatherings of peasant women or workers' wives from a specific area). Delegates attended monthly or bi-monthly meetings—the frequency of which varied with the region and sometimes the time of year—where *zhenotdely* and party figures gave "instructional" lectures. Additionally, most delegates were assigned to work in soviet, trade union, or cooperative bodies as *praktikantki*, or interns. During their term as interns, these women were to be shown the functioning of governmental and other bodies, thereby obtaining first-hand knowledge of state administration. To serve as a type of "transmission belt" between women and the party, the delegates were also required to report to the women who elected them, holding meetings where they would share their acquired knowledge.

<sup>31</sup> TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12744; ll. 1-8; TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12858; ll. 1-11.

<sup>32</sup> *Kommunistka*, Nos. 16-17 (September-October 1921), p. 60, as quoted in Wood, *Gender and Politics*, p. 300.

<sup>33</sup> *Kommunistka*, Nos. 3-5 (1922), p. 46, as quoted in Wood, *Gender and Politics*, p. 309.

<sup>34</sup> S. Smidovich, "O soveshchani i zaveduiushchikh oblastnymi zhenotdelami i chasti promyshlennykh i golodaiushchikh gubernii," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 3-5 (May 1922), p. 30.

<sup>35</sup> Kollontai, "Novaia Ugroza," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 6-7 (June-July 1922).

pp. 5-9. Also Wood, *Gender and Politics*, pp. 150-159.

<sup>36</sup> Kollontai, "Novaia Ugroza," pp. 6-7.

<sup>37</sup> It was not only women who spoke of the negative effects of NEP, or at least the negative effects NEP had on women and women's liberation; for example, Kuibyshev wrote that the loss of a job returns women to a position of dependence on her husband and domestic slavery, (Kuibyshev, "Novaia Ekonomicheskaiia Politika i zadachi zhenotdelov," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 16-17 [September-October 1921] pp. 10-11).

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of the level of female unemployment in the early 1920s, refer to R. E. Johnson, "Family Life in Moscow During NEP," in Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch, and Richard Stites, eds., *Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 106-124. Also see Wendy Z. Goldman, "Working Class Women and the 'Withering Away' of the Family: Popular Responses to Family Policy," in *Russia in the Era of NEP*, pp. 125-143.

<sup>39</sup> Moirova, "Perspektiva nashei raboty," pp. 3-4.

<sup>40</sup> Kollontai in TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12784; l. 56.

<sup>41</sup> For example, Kuibyshev, "Novaia Ekonomicheskaiia Politika i zadachi zhenotdelov," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 16-17 (September-October 1921), pp. 10-11; Smidovich, "Zadacha 4-ogo Vserossiiskogo soveshchaniia zavgubzhenotdelov," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 16-17 (September-October, 1921), pp. 23-25; Kollontai, "Ne uprazhdenie, a ukreplenie," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 16-17 (September-October 1921), pp. 25-27; and Putilovskaia, "XI Partiinyi s'ezd o rabote zhenotdelov," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 3-5 (May 1922), pp. 5-7.

<sup>42</sup> S. Smidovich, "Soveshchanie zaveduiushchikh chlenov Vserossiiskogo s'ezda sovetov," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 1-2 (January-February 1923), p. 28.

<sup>43</sup> TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12784; l. 56.

<sup>44</sup> Viacheslav Molotov and Vera Golubeva, "Metody raboty sredi zhenshchin pri novykh ekonomicheskikh usloviikh: Tsirkuliariy TS.K.R.K.P. Vsem oblastnym, gubernskim i uездnym komitetam R.K.P. vsem otdelam po rabote sredi zhenshchin," in *Kommunistka*, No. 1(18) (January 1922), p. 37; and Molotov and Golubeva, "Vsem oblastnym, gubernskim i uездnym komitetam R.K.P. vsem otdelam po rabote sredi zhenshchin," in *Kommunistka*, No. 1(18) (January 1922), pp. 37-38.

<sup>45</sup> Composition of delegate meetings, Vasileostrovskii raion:

Date	Total Delegates	Factory workers	White-collar	Housewives
2/1921	220	215 (97.7%)	5 (2.3%)	0
1/1922	245	201 (82.0%)	44 (17.0%)	0
7/1922	154	91 (59.1%)	62 (40.0%)	1 (0.7%)
1/1923	324	279 (86.1%)	32 (9.3%)	13 (4.0%)
1/1924	367	285 (77.7%)	57 (15.5%)	25 (6.8%)

(source: TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12744; l. 3; TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12858; ll. 1-11; TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12940; l. 3; TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 13010; l. 1)

<sup>46</sup> Lenin, "On Cooperation," written January 1923, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Lenin Anthology* (New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 708-709, emphasis in original.

<sup>47</sup> For an account of the nepmen, refer to Alan M. Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists: the Nepmen, 1921-1929* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1987).

<sup>48</sup> The *zhenotdely* used sewing circles to conduct political instruction; they would give political lessons and lead discussions while the women worked on their sewing. A 1923 resolution of the Moscow *zhenotdely* entitled "Position on the political hour in schools of cutting and sewing," stated that sewing circles "are to be set up only where it is possible to provide them with political hours," (as quoted in Chirkov, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa*, p. 168).

<sup>49</sup> "Kak luchshe provesti otpusk v derevne," in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 6 (June 1923), p. 21. For other examples of articles telling women how to spend their vacation time, see *Rabotnitsa* No. 6 (June 1923), p. 24; *Rabotnitsa*, No. 7 (July 1923): no page nos.; *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, Nos. 1-2 (May 1926), pp. 6, 26-27; "Chto Chitat'," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 10 (May 1926), p. 32; *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 11 (June 1926), pp. 30-31; and *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 10 (May 1929), no page nos.

*Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka* also featured articles on how women should spend their days off work, often encouraging women to take part in sports and exercise. This was a way not only of managing how women spent their free time, but was also part of the drive to create a healthy, productive work force.

<sup>50</sup> N. Sanzhar', "V domakh dlia rabochikh," in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 7 (July 1923), pp. 25-26.

<sup>51</sup> For examples of the "creeping totalitarianism" paradigm in the history of the Zhenotdel, refer to Hayden, *Feminism and Bolshevism*, Hayden,

"The Zhenotdel and the Bolshevik Party," and Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society*.

<sup>52</sup> In 1923 the 12th Party Congress passed a resolution which made each section of the *zhenotdely* answerable to the local party committee rather than the *zhenotdely* hierarchy, thus giving party committees greater control over the Women's Sections, at least on paper. Additionally, in September 1923 the Orgbiuro issued a resolution calling for all *zhenotdely* leaders [*zaveduiushchie*] to be members of the local party committee (albeit as of March 1924 only half of these directors were party committee members) (Chirkov, *Reshenie Zhenskogo voprosa*, p. 15; Wood, *Gender and Politics*, p. 337; and S. Smidovich, "5-e Vserossiiskoe soveshchanie zavzhenotdelami i guprofinstrukturorov. Itogi vsesoiuznogo soveshchaniia zaveduiushchikh otdelami rabotnits i krest'ianok," in *Kommunistka*, No. 3 [March 1924], p. 20). For a history of the relationship between the party and the Central Women's Section, refer to Hayden, "The Zhenotdel and the Bolshevik Party," pp. 150-173.

<sup>53</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the multidirectional concept of power, refer to Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (2d ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), Part II, especially Ch. 9.

<sup>54</sup> S. Smidovich, "Soveshchanie zaveduiushchikh chlenov vserossiiskogo s"ezda sovetov," in *Kommunistka*, Nos. 1-2 (January-February 1923), p. 28.

<sup>55</sup> P. Kozhanyi, "Ob obshchestvennom pitanii," in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 10 (October 1923), p. 22.

<sup>56</sup> *Rabotnitsa*, No. 2 (February 1923), pp. 18, 24.

<sup>57</sup> Wood, *Gender and Politics*, pp. 453-454. For an in-depth discussion of the composition of the delegate meetings in one region of Leningrad, refer to Michelle V. Fuqua, "The Zhenotdely and Urban Women: Women's Liberation and the Search for a *Novyi Byt* in Early Soviet Russia" (Master's Thesis, University of Washington, 1995) Ch. 4.

<sup>58</sup> For a history of *Rabotnitsa*, refer to V. Vavilina, ed., *Rabotnitsa, vseгда s nami* (Moskva: Idz. "Pravda," 1964).

<sup>59</sup> "Ot redaktsii," in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 1 (January 1923), p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> For more information on the *besprizorniki*, refer to Ball, *And Now My Soul is Hardened*; Ball, "The Roots of *Besprizornost*"; and Stevens, "Children of the Revolution."

<sup>61</sup> For a discussion of female crime in the 1920s, refer to Louise Shelley, "Female Criminality in the 1920s: A Consequence of Inadvertent and Deliberate Change," in *Russian History*, Vol. 9. Nos. 2-3 (1982), pp. 265-284.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of the role of conservative women in supporting the traditional family structure, refer to Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution*.

<sup>63</sup> Clements, "The Birth of the New Soviet Woman", pp. 230-232.

<sup>64</sup> Wood, *Gender and Politics*, p. 453.

<sup>65</sup> Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 136.

<sup>66</sup> William E. Odom, *The Soviet Volunteers: Modernization and Bureaucracy in a Public Mass Organization* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 6-7.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18. Mark von Hagen also agrees with this assessment of voluntary associations, especially those involved in defense, writing that the Bolsheviks had "a whole network of institutions to socialize their population in the values of the political elite," (*Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship. The Red Army and the Soviet State, 1917-1930* [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990], p. 339).

<sup>69</sup> Philip Selznick, *TVA and the Grass Roots*, as quoted in Odom, *Soviet Volunteers*, p. 31. Also refer to Odom, *Soviet Volunteers*, pp. 42, 35.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 200-204. For a discussion of Bolshevik conceptions of space and time and their application in the private sphere, see Ch. 7-10.

<sup>71</sup> For a discussion of the party's attempts to structure the leisure time of Soviet youth, refer to Anne E. Gorsuch, "Soviet youth and the politics of popular culture during NEP," in *Social History*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (May 1992), pp. 189-201.

<sup>72</sup> Eric Naiman, "The Case of Chubarov Alley: Collective Rape, Utopian Desire, and the Mentality of NEP," in *Russian History*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1990), p. 7. Also see Molly Masland, "Portrayals of Women in Early Soviet Cinema: Private Life and Utopian Vision during NEP,"

(Unpublished course paper, Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington, 1994).

<sup>73</sup> For a discussion on party reaction to sexual debauchery among teenagers and the attempt to combat the spread of such behaviors, refer to Naiman, "The Case of Chubarov Alley."

<sup>74</sup> Otdel okhrany materinstva i mladenchestva Gubzdrava, "Ob aborte," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 3(21) (March 1925), p. 47.

<sup>75</sup> M. Vasil'eva, "Po nuzhde delaiut abort," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 2(20) (February 1925), p. 37. For more examples, see "Ob Aborto. Pis'ma rabotnits," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 2(20) (February 1925), p. 37; and Otdel okhrany materinstva i mladenchestva Gubzdrava, "Ob aborte," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 3(21) (March 1925), p. 47.

<sup>76</sup> Delegatka, "Nuzhno borot'sia s abortami," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 23 (June 1926), p. 20, emphasis added.

<sup>77</sup> P. Kudelli, "Chemu uchit Il'ich. K voprosu o brake i sem'e," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 24 (December 1926), p. 5, emphasis added.

<sup>78</sup> For an in-depth discussion of women's views and their participation in the 1926 Family Code debate, refer to Wendy Goldman, "Freedom and Its Consequences: The Debate on the Soviet Family Code of 1926," in *Russian History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Winter 1984), pp. 362-388; and Goldman, "Working-Class Women," pp. 125-143.

<sup>79</sup> For a discussion of the 1926 Family Law debates, refer to Goldman, "Freedom and Its Consequences," pp. 362-388; John Quigley, "The 1926 Soviet Family Code: Retreat from Free Love," in *Soviet Union*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1979), pp. 166-174; and Beatrice Farnsworth, "Bolshevik Alternatives and the Soviet Family: The 1926 Marriage Law Debate," in Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dallin, and Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, eds., *Women in Russia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1977), pp. 139-165.

<sup>80</sup> For a discussion of the various women who participated in the 1926 Family Code debates, refer to Goldman, "Freedom and Its Consequences," pp. 362-388.

<sup>81</sup> "Obsuzhdaem," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 1(31) (January 1926), p. 20.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20. Unfortunately, there is no indication of whether this woman was a worker or a peasant.

<sup>83</sup> "Obsuzhdaem," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 4 (February 1926), p. 30.

<sup>84</sup> "My obsuzhdaem," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 3 (February 1926), p. 23; and "Obsuzhdaem," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 4 (February 1926), p. 30. For more examples of women's comments on the proposed legislation, see also *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 6 (March 1926), p. 21.

<sup>85</sup> N. Svetlanina, "Nasha kritika," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 19 (October 1926), pp. 28-29.

<sup>86</sup> Vilenskaia, "Nashi doshkol'nye uchrezhdeniia ne mogut obsluzhivat' vsekh detei," in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 24 (December 1926), pp. 19-20.

<sup>87</sup> "Pomoshch' materi," in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 1 (January 1927), pp. 19-20. Also refer to V. Michurin, "Obsuzhdaem. O vospitanii v sem'e," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 16 (August 1926), p. 18; V. Michurin, "Obsuzhdaem. Eshche o semeinom vospitanii detei," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 23 (December 1926), pp. 22-25; and V. Michurin, "Obsuzhdaem. Eshe o semeinom vospitanii detei," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 24 (December 1926), pp. 20-21.

<sup>88</sup> V. Michurin, "Obsuzhdaem. Eshche o semeinom vospitanii detei," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 23 (December 1926), p. 22.

<sup>89</sup> Clements, "The Birth of the New Soviet Woman," pp. 229-230.

<sup>90</sup> H. Kent Geiger, *The Family in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 50; and Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>91</sup> F. M. Nakhimson, "Obsuzhdaem: Novyi zakon o brake i sem'e," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 12(30) (Dec. 1925), p. 22, emphasis added.

<sup>92</sup> Chirkov, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa*, p. 192.

<sup>93</sup> For example, "Stranitsa domokhoziaiki," in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 23 (December 1926), p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> N. Kaptel'tseva, "Chto pishut chitatel'nitsy o zhurnale," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 7 (April 1927), p. 28.

<sup>95</sup> Pomoshch' domokhoziaike," in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 23 (Dec. 1926), p. 22.

<sup>96</sup> For a discussion of the Bolsheviks' quasi-Taylorist conceptions of space and time and their application in the private sphere, see Stites,

<sup>97</sup> *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 1 (Jan. 1929), no page nos.; and *Rabotnitsa krest'ianka*, No. 11 (June 1929), no page nos. There was also a similar advertisement in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 2 (Jan. 1927), p. 18 which stated that every month the magazine features sewing patterns, needlework, and pages "of the latest fashions."

<sup>98</sup> For example, *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 3 (Feb. 1926) p. 5; *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 12 (June 1927), p. 19; and "Stranichka domokhoziaiki," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 24 (Dec. 1927), pp. 22-23.

<sup>99</sup> N. Kaptel'tseva, "Chto pishut chitatel'nitsy o zhurnale," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 7 (April 1927), pp. 28-29.

<sup>100</sup> P. Z., "Stranichka Rabsel'korki. Nasha kritika," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 13 (July 1926), p. 31.

<sup>101</sup> E. Bochkareva and S. Liubimova, *Svetlyi put'* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1967), pp. 38-39.

<sup>102</sup> Composition of delegate meetings, Vasileostrovskii raion:

Date	Total Delegates	Factory workers	White-collar	Housewives
2/1921	220	215 (97.7%)	5 (2.3%)	0
1/1922	245	201 (82.0%)	44 (17.0%)	0
7/1922	154	91 (59.1%)	62 (40.0%)	1 (0.7%)
1/1923	324	279 (86.1%)	32 (9.3%)	13 (4.0%)
1/1924	367	285 (77.7%)	57 (15.5%)	25 (6.8%)
1926-27*	1500	1111 (74.0%)	128 (8.5%)	235 (15.7%)

\*This year 26 house servants (1.7%) were recorded as participating in the delegate meetings. (Source: *TsGAIPD*, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12744; l. 3; *TsGAIPD*, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12858; ll. 1-11; *TsGAIPD*, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12940; l. 3; *TsGAIPD*, f. 16; op. 13; d. 13010; l. 1; *TsGAIPD*, f. 16; op. 13; d. 13286; ll. 6-20.)

<sup>103</sup> Women in the delegate meetings in Vasileostrovskii raion:

	As reported on 1/1/1924:	As reported on 4/1/1924:
Age: 18-25 years	30.8%	35.1%
25-30 years	28.3%	39.8%
30-40 years	26.7%	20.3%
40+ years	14.2%	4.8%

As reported at the beginning of the delegate meetings. 1926/27:

Age: 20-23 years	11.9%
24-30 years	28%
30-40 years	52.1%
40+ years	8%

For comparison, the age distribution of the female population of Leningrad over the age of 20 (based on the 1926 census):

	<u>Women in general:</u>	<u>Women Workers:</u>
Age: 20-24 years	17.8%	18.6%
25-29 years	18.6%	19.6%
30-39 years	26.5%	29%
40-49 years	16.4%	17.1%
50-59 years	11%	9.1%
60+ years	9.6%	6.3%

In 1924, the ages of those in the delegate meetings was:

	<u>As Reported on 1/1/1924:</u>	<u>As Reported on 4/1/1924:</u>
Age: 18-25 years:	113	18-25 years: 133
25-30 years:	104	25-35 years: 151
30-40 years:	98	35-45 years: 77
40+ years:	52	45+ years: 18

In 1927 the age distribution was:

<u>As reported for the beginning of the delegate meetings (no date provided)</u>	
20-23 years:	178
24-30 years:	420
30-40 years:	782
40+ years:	120

(Sources: *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, Vol. 1, p. 219; *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, Vol. 2, p. 236; TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 13010; ll. 1-15; and TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 13286; ll. 6, 20.)

<sup>104</sup> Literacy rate for women in delegate meetings, Vasileostrovskii raion, 1921-1927:

<u>Date</u>	<u>% Literate</u>	<u>% Semi-literate</u>	<u>% Semi- &amp; literate</u>	<u>% illiterate</u>
1/1921	62.7%	36%	98.7%	1.2%
1/1922	52.6%	42%	94.6%	5.3%
7/1922	42.8%	55.8%	98.6%	1.2%
1/1923	90.7%	5.5%	96.2%	3.7%
1/1924	80.1%	15.8%	95.9%	4.1%
1926/7	80.0%	11.5%	91.5%	8.5%

According to the 1926 census the literacy rate for urban women ages 9-49 was 73.9%. In Leningrad alone, the rate for women over age 20 was 80.4% overall and 74.5% among working women. Another source (using the age group 9-49) finds an overall female literacy rate of 88.3% in Leningrad. (Sources: *Zhenshchiny i deti v SSSR. Statisticheskii sbornik* [Moskva, Gosstatizdat 1961], p. 65; *Leningrad i Leningradskaiia oblast' v tsifrakh. Statisticheskii sbornik* [Lenizdat, 1971], p. 103; *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, 56 vols. [Izd. TsSU Soiuzu SSR, 1928-1933], Vol 1, p. 29; *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, Vol. 2.; p. 236; TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12744; l. 1; TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12858; ll. 1-11;

TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 12940; l. 3; TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 13010; l. 1; and TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 13286; l. 6)

<sup>105</sup> TsGAIPD, f. 16; op. 13; d. 13286; ll. 6, 20.

<sup>106</sup> N. Kaptel'tseva, "Chto pishut chitatel'nitsy o zhurnale," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 7 (April 1927), pp. 28-29.

<sup>107</sup> For a transcript of the 1927 Women's Congress, refer to *Vsesoiuznii S'ezd rabotnits i krest'ianok, chlenov sel'skikh i gorodskikh sovetov i volostnykh (raionnykh) ispolnitel'nykh komitetov. 10-16 oktiabria 1927 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moskva: Izdanie TsIK Soiuza SSR, 1927). This source records the entire conference proceedings, including all speeches as well as questions and comments from Congress participants, without additional comments by the editors.

For an example of a speech which covered the issue of public institutions, especially child care facilities, and the liberation of women, refer to Artiukhina's address on pages 184-208.

<sup>108</sup> *Vsesoiuznyi S'ezd rabotnits i krest'ianok, Chlenov sel'skikh i gorodskikh sovetov i volostnykh (raionnykh) ispolnitel'nykh komitetov. 10-16 oktiabria 1927 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet*, pp. 92-93. Refer also to Artiukhina's address to the Congress on pages 184-208.

<sup>109</sup> Jessica Smith, *Women in Soviet Russia* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1928), p. 177.

<sup>110</sup> For example, refer to Tatiana Tchernavin, *We Soviet Women* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. Inc., 1936). For pro-Soviet literature written by women who served in the *zhenotdely* refer to *Oktiabrem rozhdeniye* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1967); *Revoliutsionerki Rossii: vospominaniia i ocherki revoliutsionnoi deiatel'nosti rossiiskikh bol'shevichek* (Moskva: Institut Marksizma-Leninizma pri TsK KPSS, "Sovetskaia Rossiia," 1983); *Uchastnitsy velikogo sozdaniia* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1962); *Zhenshchiny goroda Lenina* (Institut istorii Partii pri Leningradskom obkome KPSS. Filial instituta Marksizma-Leninizma pri Lenizdat, 1963); *Zhenshchiny Rasskazyvaiut* (Smolensk: Smolenskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1959); *Zhenshchiny Strany Sovetov: Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1977); and *Zhenshchiny v revoliutsii* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1959).

<sup>111</sup> *Rabotnitsa*, No. 23 (December 1926), p. 15.

<sup>112</sup> "Nashi stolovye," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 10 (May 1928), pp.

21-23; "Nashi stolovye," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 12 (June 1928), pp. 17-19; and "Stolovye pod kritiku," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 13 (July 1928), pp. 11-13.

<sup>113</sup> Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, p. 201.

<sup>114</sup> Smith, *Women in Soviet Russia*, p. 192. The author does not provide a date for this information.

<sup>115</sup> Rabkorka Semenova, "Pochemu ne izzhit' nedostatki," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 10 (May 1928), p. 21; Rabotnitsa Bogdanova, "Nedostatkov mnogo," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 10 (May 1928), p. 21; Domokhoziaika L-va, "Stolovye pod kritiku," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 13 (July 1928), p. 12; and M. Zarina, "Obshchestvennoe pitanie," in *Rabotnitsa*, No. 6 (March 1924), pp. 25-26.

<sup>116</sup> Tchernavin, *We Soviet Women*, p. 167, emphasis added. The author does not provide a date for this information.

<sup>117</sup> Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 103.

<sup>118</sup> Barbara Evans Clements, "Working-Class and Peasant Women in the Russian Revolution, 1917-1923," in *Signs*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Winter 1982), pp. 215-235; and Beatrice Farnsworth, "Village Women Experience the Revolution," in Gleason, Kenez, Stites, *Bolshevik Culture*, pp. 238-259.

<sup>119</sup> For a discussion of the role of Russian peasant women in village society during the post-emancipation era, refer to Christine D. Worobec, "Victims or Actors? Russian Peasant Women and Patriarchy," in Esther Kingston-Mann and Timothy Mixter (eds.), *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800 - 1921* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 177-206.

<sup>120</sup> L. Matorina, "Rabota sredi krest'ianok," in *Rabotnitsa i krest'ianka*, No. 3 (March 1925), p. 12.

<sup>121</sup> Clements, "Working-Class and Peasant Women," p. 224.

<sup>122</sup> Worobec, "Victims or Actors?" pp. 180-181.

<sup>123</sup> Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 148.

<sup>124</sup> *Pravda* (Moscow), 17 January 1930, p. 1.

<sup>125</sup> *Pravda* (18 January 1930), p. 4.

<sup>126</sup> For a discussion of the "women's riots" against collectivization, refer to Lynne Viola, "Bab'i Bunty and Peasant Women's Protest During Collectivization," in Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola, eds., *Russian Peasant Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 189-205.

<sup>127</sup> Hayden, "The Zhenotdel and the Bolshevik Party," p. 171; and *Pravda* (18 January 1930), p. 4.

<sup>128</sup> Stites, "Zhenotdel," p. 192.

<sup>129</sup> Hayden, "The Zhenotdel and the Bolshevik Party," p. 171.

<sup>130</sup> Stites, "Zhenotdel," p. 191.

<sup>131</sup> Hayden, "The Zhenotdel and the Bolshevik Party," p. 171.

<sup>132</sup> H. Kent Geiger, "The Fate of the Family in Soviet Russia: 1917-1944," in Bell and Vogel, *A Modern Introduction*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>133</sup> Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, p. 199.

<sup>134</sup> Wood, *Gender and Politics*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>135</sup> Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, p. 157.

<sup>136</sup> Siegelbaum, *Soviet State and Society*, p. 226.

<sup>137</sup> Speech by Stalin at the 12th Party Congress, 1923, as quoted in Wood, *Gender and Politics*, p. 410.

<sup>138</sup> Naiman, "The Case of Chubarov Alley," pp. 1-3.

<sup>139</sup> Daniel R. Brower, "The Smolensk Scandal and the End of NEP," in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Winter 1986), pp. 703-706.

<sup>140</sup> Naiman, "The Case of Chubarov Alley," pp. 1-3.

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